ACCOUNTS, MEDIA, AND CULTURE: AN INTERNATIONAL IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT EXPERIMENT

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2004

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Lee, with love and thanks.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help, dedication and inspiration of many wonderful people, both at the University of Florida and much further afield. Lynda Lee Kaid, my chair, has taught me more about doing quality research than I ever thought I would know. It has been a privilege to work with her on this and many other projects during my time here, and I thank her for her encouragement and support.

My other committee members from the College of Journalism and Communications, Juan Carlos Molleda, Marilyn Roberts, and Leonard Tipton, have each contributed time, energy and great ideas to this dissertation. All are superb teachers and scholars, and I thank them for all the information, exasperation, and camaraderie they have shared with me during my time here at Florida.

A seminar taught by my outside member, Barry Schlenker, provided the idea for this dissertation. His feedback and guidance have been essential to the completion of this study, and for that I offer him my sincere thanks.

Of course, having worked on both my master's and Ph.D. degrees here at Florida, I have had the pleasure of working with many of Florida's fine faculty members at one time or another. Two in particular, John Sutherland and Kathleen Kelly, deserve warm thanks for being extremely helpful and understanding bosses.

Juan Carlos Molleda, Antoni Castells i Talens, and Julio Cesar Herrero all helped with the creation of the stimulus materials for this study. Designer Aimee Robinson did an admirable job of creating the look and feel of MultiChem Corporation on a very

limited budget. This dissertation truly would not have been possible without their generous help, and I thank them with all my heart.

Because communication is an applied field, my work has benefited tremendously from the years I spent in the publishing industry. For giving a medievalist a chance in a very competitive field I owe three people in particular: Nick Blenkey and the late Ran Slater at Simmons-Boardman Publications, and Melissa Snyder at *USA Today*. I hope the completion of this dissertation serves to justify in part the faith they showed in me so many years ago.

Many friends have cheered me on – and cheered me up, when need be – during this mid-life career change, and for that I thank them all. Three of them, Camille Broadway, Janet Brownstein and Sandra Friedrich, have been particular sources of encouragement during my graduate work. I am confident they will all be relieved that we can talk about something other than my dissertation from this time forward.

My in-laws, Patrick and Kay Ahern, provided many hours of babysitting during their trips here to Florida, so that I could get some guilt-free work accomplished. They even helped with translation. I appreciate all their help and support.

My parents, Michael and Maureen Connolly, have never stopped encouraging me to pursue my dream of an academic career. They have shared their time, energy, and resources without hesitation to help make that dream a reality. They are an inspiration to me on every level and I appreciate them more than they will ever know.

My daughters, Abigail Catherine and Eleanor Rose, have been a source of great joy, cheerleading and diversion throughout my graduate career. They have been patient – well, *mostly* patient – while I was locked in my office working on my "big paper,"

instead of playing Cariboo and making minestrone like a proper parent. I thank them for them for every hug, kiss, note and poem that helped keep my priorities straight throughout this process.

Finally, I thank my husband, Lee, for his unwavering belief in me. His ability to take any situation and turn it into an opportunity never ceases to amaze me. He has been, quite simply, the most wonderful partner anyone could ever hope to have.

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ACCOUNTS, MEDIA, AND CULTURE: AN INTERNATIONAL IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT EXPERIMENT

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August 2004

Chair: Lynda Lee Kaid
Major Department: Mass Communication

Although multinational corporations operate in multiple cultural environments, they currently have no way of anticipating how audiences in different cultural settings will receive, evaluate and respond to their corporate communications in the wake of a crisis. Using impression management as a theoretical framework, specifically the triangle model of responsibility, this dissertation employed a quasi-experimental design in two countries, Spain and the United States, to study the impact of culture, types of excuses and media format on corporate credibility.

Credibility was measured on a 16-item semantic differential scale, with two constituent factors: trustworthiness and expertise. Data were analyzed using a 2 (country–Spain or United States) x 3 (excuse—clarity, obligation, control) x 2 (format–ad or newspaper story) factorial ANOVA.

The results of the study reveal that nationality is the most significant predictor of evaluations of trustworthiness and expertise for a corporation in the wake of an adverse

incident. Spanish subjects found excuses offered by a fictitious corporation less credible than American subjects.

Data further reveal that some excuses offered in response to an adverse incident may diminish credibility more than others. Judgments of expertise were more damaged by a prescription clarity excuse (in which the corporation had no way of knowing that the explosion would occur because no scientific literature had predicted it) than by an organizational control excuse (in which the explosion was beyond the organization's control because of a faulty valve).

Finally, results of the study indicate that issuing an excuse in an advertisement or within the context of a news story makes no difference in corporate credibility. This finding implies that organizations wishing to have complete control of their message may wish to choose advertising as a vehicle for delivering their advocacy message.

CHAPTER 1
PURPOSE AND SIGNIGICANCE OF THIS STUDY

Introduction

Perhaps no one has worked harder to build and maintain a particular kind of identity, and make a particular kind of impression, than TV personality and business tycoon Martha Stewart. In fact, Ms. Stewart became so synonymous with that identity—the upscale, stylish, do-it-yourselfing überhousewife—that the former stockbroker and divorcee from Connecticut was able to parlay it into a vast media empire. Her three magazines and her Emmy-award winning television show all bear her name, a testimony to the powerful association between the woman and the lifestyle she has come to represent.

In cultivating her image, and that of her company, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO), Ms. Stewart was not so very different from the Chief Executive Officer any other U.S. corporation. According to Barton (1993)

> U.S. corporations spend millions of dollars on a daily basis to project a positive image with the consuming public. By placing corporate spokespeople on talk shows, mailing press kits, participating in trade shows, and making charitable donations, organizations hope to build and maintain an image that will enhance their overall performance. (p. 128)

In fact, the only difference between Ms. Stewart and all but a few CEOs around the world was the almost complete identification of her with both the corporation and the brands it represents.

Ms. Stewart's consciously crafted identity—along with that of her media empire—was dealt a devastating blow on June 4, 2003, when after months of investigation the

U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York indicted the celebrity on charges of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and securities fraud emanating from a 2001 stock trade. Ms. Stewart pleaded not guilty to all the charges. However, she did announce she was stepping down as chairwoman and chief executive of MSLO (Hays, 2003).

Ms. Stewart did much more than simply vow to fight the charges against her, however. On June 5, Ms. Stewart took out a full-page advertisement in *USA Today*, the national newspaper, proclaiming her innocence and outlining her side of the story ("Open letter," 2003). The ad, "An Open Letter from Martha Stewart," was addressed to her "friends and loyal supporters." Ms. Stewart did not apologize for her actions in the advertisement. Instead, she sought to excuse and justify them. In the ad she reiterated her contention that the sale of her ImClone stock on December 27, 2001, a day before the company revealed that the Federal Drug Administration had failed to accept an application for a new cancer drug, was based on price considerations, and not insider information (Hays, 2003). She closed by inviting readers to visit her Web site, www.marthatalks.com, to contact her and receive "current information on the case" ("Open letter," 2003).

Why did Stewart turn to advertising at this critical time? Why not simply release a statement to the press, or consent to an interview with a sympathetic, high profile network reporter? While organizations and individuals use advertising for a wide variety of reasons, the most widely used forms of advertising give the public information about specific products and services (Belch & Belch, 1998). However, advertising can also be used to create images for companies, to attract potential employees, to announce changes

in an organization's structure or operations, to influence social debate and public policy, and to offer accounts of corporate or individual actions.

Stewart's decision to pay for an advertisement in the country's best-read daily newspaper illustrates a dramatic attempt to restore her image, which had been tarnished by legal proceedings. In averring her innocence, Martha Stewart sought to reclaim a part of her identity—that of an honest businesswoman—that was denied her by the allegations of illegal activity. In so doing, Ms. Stewart was engaging in an extremely important and strategic means of impression management.

All organizations, like all individuals, engage in impression management, which Schlenker, Britt, and Pennington (1996) define as "the goal-directed activity of controlling information about some person, object, idea, or event" (p.118). Impression management has its roots in the work of Erving Goffman (1959), a sociologist who described a dramaturgical view of social interactions, in which all people are considered "performers," and those with whom they are interacting–even the self–are considered "audience." Current impression management study deepens and expands the life-as-theater analogy, suggesting that, just like actors, all people seek to influence how an audience, either real or imagined, perceives their "personality traits, abilities, intentions, behaviors, attitudes, values, physical characteristics, social characteristics, family, friends, job, and possessions" (Schlenker, 1980, p. 6).

From an organizational point of view–and Martha Stewart can hardly be separated from her eponymous corporation–the decision to use advertising as a public relations tool is an important one from an impression management perspective. By taking out an advertisement, rather than granting an interview to a journalist, an organization or

individual is assured that a message is transmitted exactly as desired. It is reasonable to assume that precise message transmission is particularly important when an individual or corporate entity is facing legal action for alleged wrongdoing.

However, such precision may come at a cost: credibility. Americans, in particular, are savvy media users. They know there are no “scrubbing bubbles” in their can of bathroom cleanser. They know that their cookies are not made by “elves.” While Americans enjoy advertising (De Mooij, 1998a), they may not take it too seriously. Knowing this, however, and well aware of the benefits of public relations in building positive images for organizations of all kinds, organizations and individuals continue to pay for issue advertising, to ensure their complete control over a message they wish the public to receive, often in the wake of some kind of corporate crisis.

Looking at organizational communications during crises, Kaufmann, Kesner, and Hazen (1994) suggest, “A careful and thoughtful program of matching the communications method to the crisis may be the answer to surviving the thorniest of organizational challenges” (p.39). With this in mind, the Martha Stewart advertisement opens a number of interesting lines of study. First, what type of impression does an individual or corporation make when it chooses to account for activities in advertising? Second, is it different from the impression made by the same information conveyed by another media form, such as within the body of a newspaper article? Does the type of excuse offered change the way individuals respond to the event?

Such questions become even more complex when one considers the global nature of today’s business environment. For example, transnational corporations, which have operations in more than one country or region of the world, face a daunting problem in

the wake of any crisis: knowing what is the most appropriate communications tool for important messages in multiple cultures. The problem is compounded by the fact that many organizations manage their transnational communications efforts from home offices that are often far removed—geographically and culturally—from the communities that must be reached with a corporation's message (Molleda & Quinn, 2004).

Large multinational corporations are not the only organizations that must deal effectively with publics from a variety of cultural backgrounds. International audiences are increasingly important even to companies that largely operate within one country, in the form of foreign shareholders. The value of U.S. assets held by foreign entities in 2001 was $9.4 trillion (Quinlan & McCaughrin, 2002). Clearly, few public corporations operate in a truly monocultural environment at the beginning of the 21st century. However, the implications of the multicultural business environment on corporate communications are only beginning to be explored.

Ware and Linkugel (1973) underscore the importance of choosing a "culturally acceptable stance from which to speak on [one's] own behalf" (p. 283) to a successful self-defense. This implies that some defenses are more acceptable in some cultures than in others. However, there is little information on how self-defenses are viewed in other cultures. In Martha Stewart's case, for example, how would an Indonesian shareholder of MSO stock react to her defiant stand against the authority of the government? How would a Costa Rican housewife view her account of the stock trade? Even assuming that Stewart's advertisement could be translated perfectly into another language, which many scholars doubt (de Mooij, 1998a), the reaction of the individual receiving the message would be influenced by his or her cultural values (Gannon, 2001). In other words,

whether Stewart was able to give off the desired impression in a cross-cultural context would be related not just to the message sent, but also to the worldview of the person reading the advertisement.

This suggests more avenues of inquiry. First, do cultural values affect the impression given off by a corporation using advertising to make an excuse? Second, which cultural variables are related to those impressions, either positively or negatively? Third, are cultural variables related to the kinds of excuses that are considered acceptable in the wake of an adverse incident?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to extend the body of work already completed in the social psychology field of impression management in two areas where there has been relatively little study thus far: mass communication, specifically corporate crisis communication, and cross-cultural comparative study. Using a quasi-experimental design, the researcher tested the effects of different types of excuses and different delivery mechanisms for those excuses on the perceived credibility of a fictitious corporation.

Additionally, this dissertation begins to test a specific hypothesis related to culture and communications, specifically that cultural values are related to the perceived credibility of corporations in the wake of a crisis. This was accomplished by conducting the experiment in two different cultural contexts: Spain and the United States.

Although cross-cultural communication is an emerging field in mass communication (Molleda & Connolly-Ahern, 2002), most of the work done in the area has been descriptive in nature, focusing on case studies and content analyses. The body of literature in the field of crisis communication includes relatively few empirical studies.

This study employs an interdisciplinary approach, using an existing theoretical framework from the field of social psychology – impression management – to test the effects of different crisis communication strategies on audiences from different cultures. In this way, the dissertation makes an original contribution to the body of knowledge in the mass communication field. An extensive search of the literature in the areas of advertising, public relations, organizational communications, and social psychology identified no similar study.

Statement of the Problem

Although multinational corporations operate in multiple cultural environments, they currently have no way of anticipating how audiences in different cultural settings will receive, evaluate and respond to their corporate communications, especially in the wake of a corporate crisis. This dissertation employs a quasi-experimental design to determine which kinds of excuses are most credible with audiences from different cultural backgrounds.

The sample consisted of undergraduate students from large, academically competitive universities, one in the southeastern United States and two in central Spain. (Every effort was made to match the samples.) The results from a 16-item semantic differential scale were subject to factor analysis, and the variables that were derived from that analysis were analyzed using a 2 (country—Spain or United States) x 3 (excuse—clarity, obligation, control) x 2 (format—advertisement or newspaper article) factorial ANOVA.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Defending oneself verbally in the wake of an attack on one's nature or actions has deep roots in Western society (Ware & Linkugel, 1973). Socrates, Martin Luther, Richard M. Nixon, and John F. Kennedy are just a few of the historical figures who have made speeches of self-defense in response to criticism of their actions or even the very nature of their existence. While apologia have traditionally been studied within the realm of interpersonal and public communication, Hearit (1996) notes that in the era of big business, it is often corporations that feel the need to "clear their name" (p. 234). This dissertation will serve to expand the ancient study of self-defense communications through an empirical examination of the affects of a sub-category of such speeches—corporate excuses—in different cultural and mediated contexts.

Apologia

In rhetorical terms, the defense of one's reputation or actions is known as *apologia* (Aristotle, trans. 1954; see also Benoit, 1995; Hearit, 1996, 1999; Ware & Linkugel, 1973). The goal of all apologiae is simple: to bring resolution to an existing conflict between the speaker and society.

Many different typologies have been suggested for studying apologiae, from a variety of academic disciplines, including speech communication, sociology and psychology (Benoit, 1995; Benoit & Drew, 1997; Schlenker, 1980). Typologies vary from parsimonious, such as Ware and Linkugel's (1973) typology of four general self-defense postures and Schlenker's (1980) list of four remedial tactics used in response to

predicaments, to detailed, such as Scott and Lyman's (1968) 10-part typology of accounts and Benoit's (1995) 14-item list of image restoration strategies, to exceedingly complex, as in Schönbach's (1990) taxonomy of almost 150 reactions of actors during account phases. This complex list provides some indication of the wide range of ways in which people and corporations seek to explain their behavior once their reputation is threatened. In fact, Schönbach's vast taxonomy serves to underscore directly the importance of reputation management in modern, Western society.

Typologies create a starting point for empirical research by creating a framework for future analysis (Coombs & Schmidt, 2000). Working in the area of speech communication, Ware and Linkugel (1973) used Abelson's (1959) four basic strategies of conflict resolution to create their typology of apologetic postures. From Abelson's list they identified the following basic apologetic factors: *denial*, in which the accused completely disavows a charge or event; *bolstering*, in which the accused tries to link his own identity to some positive event, object, information, or person; *differentiation*, in which the accused tries to separate some event, object, information, or person from the larger context of the discussion; and *transcendence*, in which the accused attempts to join some event, information, object, or relationship to a larger context that has not previously been part of the discussion. These strategies fall into two distinct types (Ware & Linkugel, 1973). Denial and bolstering are *reformative*, because they do not attempt to change the audience's meaning of an incident; differentiation and transcendence are *transformative*, because their goal is to change the audience's meaning of an incident.

Ware and Linkugel (1973) then combined the apologetic factors to classify four main apologetic postures that dominate apologiae. Absolutive speeches combine denial

and differentiation, with the goal of acquittal for the speaker. Vindicative speeches combine denial and transcendence, with the goal of illustrating the moral rectitude of the accused with regard to his accusers. Explanative speeches combine bolstering and differentiation, with the goal of giving the audience information about the event that will improve their understanding and make condemnation of the speaker less likely. Jusitificative speeches combine bolstering and transcendence, with the goal of seeking not only understanding, but outright approval, from the audience.

While apologiae can, and often do, employ elements of each of the conflict resolution strategies, Ware and Linkugel (1973) suggest that most apologiae derive their persuasive power from one primary posture. However, they offer no empirical evidence to substantiate that claim. In fact, most of the speeches included in their study include examples of at least two postures, and there are no corroborating data on audience effects to confirm which of the postures was most effective in gaining audience acceptance of the apologia. However, many rhetorical critics have employed Ware and Linkugel's typology in their analyses, especially in the area of political discourse, such as Vartabedian's (1985) analysis of Nixon's Vietnam speeches. From a corporate apologia perspective, Benoit and Lindsey (1987) used Ware and Linkugel's typology to examine the restoration of Tylenol's image in the wake of a notable poisoning scare.

Working in the field of sociology, Scott and Lyman (1968) defined an account as, "a statement made by a social actor to explain unanticipated or untoward behavior—whether that behavior is his own or that of others, and whether the proximate cause for the statement arises from the actor himself or from someone else" (p. 46). They identify two main categories of accounts: excuses and justifications. Within each category, there

are a number of sub-categories. Excuses, which are defined as "socially approved vocabularies for mitigating responsibility when conduct is questioned" (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p. 47), come in four types of appeals: appeals to accidents, appeals to defeasibility, appeals to biological drives, and scapegoating. Of these, appeals to biological drives, which normally refer to an excuse based on an uncontrollable appetite, such as addiction or sexual deviance, is not likely to transfer from the interpersonal to the corporate realm. It is interesting, however, that the authors link these biological drives excuses to culture, suggesting that some excuses may be more acceptable in some cultures than in others. As an example, they offer an ethnography of a Mexican woman who was angry not because her husband had lipstick on his shirt, but because he lied about it. The woman explains:

> And he had me almost believing it was red paint! It was not that I am jealous. I realize a man can never be satisfied with just one woman, but I cannot stand being made a fool of. (Lewis, as cited in Scott & Lyman, p. 50)

Scott and Lyman note that failure to invoke the culturally appropriate account may result in the failure of the reparation attempt.

Justifications, according to Scott and Lyman (1968), are defined as, "socially approved vocabularies that neutralize an act or its consequences when one or both are called into question" (p. 51). In justification, an actor attempts to convince the audience of the positive aspects of an event or its consequences. The authors identify six different types of justifications: denial of injury, denial of victim, condemnation of condemners, appeal to loyalties, "sad tales" and self-fulfillment. Again, the typology has limited use in the corporate environment, since while corporations might use some of the justifications, others clearly would not be plausible. For example, "sad tales" seeks to justify an event with a pitiful story from the past; this would be an unlikely justification strategy for a corporation. Similarly, self-fulfillment seeks to justify an illegal or dangerous action as

part of an attempt to experience everything possible in the world, such as illicit drugs. Scott and Lyman's typology, in fact, seems very rooted to the time and place where they collected some of their data: interviews in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco in 1968.

Benoit's (1995) theory of image restoration strategies is a 14-part typology rooted in the field of critical analysis. The book analyzes both personal and corporate apologia, indicating that organizations, like individuals, "must attempt to restore their reputations after alleged or suspected wrong-doing" (Benoit, 1995, p. 1). The author identifies five main categories of image restoration strategies: denial, evading of responsibility, reducing offensiveness of the event, corrective action and mortification. Sub-categories of denial include simple denial and shifting of blame. Sub-categories of evading responsibility include provocation, defeasibility, accident and good intentions. Sub-categories of reducing offensiveness include bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking the accuser, and compensation.

Benoit's list is extensive, but it is also somewhat confusing because the categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, shifting blame seems to fit as easily with "evading responsibility" as with "denial," despite Benoit's assertion that shifting blame "can be considered a variant of denial, because the accused cannot have committed the repugnant act if someone else actually did it" (p. 75). Despite this, image restoration theory has supplied a theoretical framework for a number of corporate crisis case studies (Benoit, 1995; Brinson & Benoit, 1996, 1999). Coombs and Schmidt (2000) used the framework in an experimental design, testing the differences in organizational reputation, account honoring and potential supportive behavior among audiences exposed to

different image restoration strategies, however their findings indicated no significant differences among the strategies.

Working in the field of social psychology, Schlenker (1980) identified two general types of responses to predicaments: accounts and apologies. Accounts are "explanations of a predicament designed to minimize the apparent severity of the predicament" (p. 136). Accounts come in three basic forms: defenses of innocence, which absolve the actor from responsibility for the event; excuses, which allow that a negative event took place, but reduce the actor's responsibility for the event; and justifications, which allow the actor to take responsibility for a negative event, while minimizing the negative repercussions of the event (Schlenker, 1980).

Schlenker (1980) defines an apology as a response to a predicament in which "actors admit blameworthiness for an undesirable event, but concomitantly attempt to obtain a pardon or reduce the negative repercussions from real or imagined audiences" (p. 154). A complete apology includes five basic elements: an admission of guilt or remorse, a recognition of the normally prescribed conduct in the situation, rejection of the conduct, a vow to use the prescribed conduct, and some form or penance or offer of compensation. Schlenker notes, however, that the categories overlap: in response to a predicament, actors will often employ a combination of accounts and an apology in an attempt to remedy an adverse situation. Schlenker's typology is general, but comprehensive. As such, it presents a useful framework for the study of the effects of accounts on various audiences.

While typologies vary, the literature on the subject consistently notes that in response to a predicament, people are likely to communicate a self-defense that serves to

help them mitigate the impact of the event on future relationships. On the broadest level, this can be accomplished either by distancing oneself from the event partially or completely, minimizing the importance of the event, or simply apologizing for the event. For the purposes of empirical inquiry, the Schlenker (1980) typology provides a good framework, because of its small number of broad, comprehensive categories. It is possible to imagine a corporation invoking any one of Schlenker's categories; it is difficult to imagine a corporate defense that would not fit into one of Schlenker's categories.

According to Coombs and Holladay (1996), "What organizations say to their various publics during a crisis should influence the extent of the reputational and financial damage a crisis can inflict on the organizational image" (p. 292). Of course, circumstances will to a large extent determine the appropriateness of any given self-defense to the audience for which it is intended and its success in influencing public opinion (Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Schlenker, 1980; Scott & Lyman, 1968; Ware & Linkugel, 1973). When there is physical evidence of bad environmental practices in the form of contaminated drinking water, for example, the public is not likely to accept a corporation's attempt to distance itself completely from the problem.

Corporations, like individuals, must issue self-defenses appropriate to the known facts of the case in order to have them accepted by the public (Benson, 1988; Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Martinelli & Briggs, 1988). In a corporate context, apologiae are normally issued in response to some kind of crisis. A corporate crisis is defined as "an event that brings, or has the potential for bringing, an organization into disrepute and imperils its future profitability, growth, and possibly, its very survival" (Lerbinger, 1997,

p. 4). Crisis communications are the communications between an organization and its relevant publics that are designed to minimize the damage to an organization's image before, during and after a negative event (Fearn-Banks, 1996). In most corporations, crisis communications is regarded as a public relations function (Coombs, 1999; Fearn-Banks, 1996; Lerbinger, 1997). However, with increased media scrutiny and the threat of lawsuits in the wake of corporate crises, legal counselors have begun to play an increasingly important role in crisis communications (Fitzpatrick, 2000; Fitzpatrick & Rubin, 1995). Fitzpatrick and Rubin (1995) used content analysis to illustrate the difference between public relations and legal messages in the wake of a crisis.

Many case studies have examined corporate defenses in response to crisis. Dionisopoulos (1986) examined the nuclear power industry's corporate account campaign, which was designed to calm audiences in the wake of the Three Mile Island disaster. Dionisopoulos suggests a causal link between the advertising campaign and the relative unimportance of nuclear power as an issue to voters in the subsequent elections. However, there is no way for a rhetorical essay to substantiate such a claim empirically.

Hearit (1996) discussed the effectiveness of a particular form of apologia, the "kategoria" or countercharge, in a business-to-business exchange, between General Motors and Dateline NBC. Hearit suggests that the use of countercharges are an important means of challenging inaccurate or unfair media coverage, since other media outlets are likely to cover charges leveled against their competition. However, he warned that because of the "heavy-handedness" of the strategy, it is best used only when the accuser is of the same or greater size as the accused that chooses to countercharge; the

use of kategoria by corporations against smaller accusers, such as individuals or non-profit organizations, might be construed as bullying by the public.

Hearit (1999) looked at the impact of new media—and the culture of new media users—on acceptance apologia, in a study of Intel's online apologia in the wake of the discovery that its Pentium 586 chip made errors on high-level calculations. The study documents problems corporations have in cyberspace that are not present in traditional media. In particular, the "culture" of the Internet can become difficult to navigate for corporate executives who attempt to make apologia in a new media forum if they are not completely "fluent" in the language and customs of the online environment. In the case of Intel, newsgroup users refused to believe an apology actually came from Intel's CEO, because the return e-mail address on the posting was not his. For the newsgroup users, the lack of personalization of the posting translated into a lack of authenticity and, therefore, a lack of legitimacy and credibility for both the CEO and his corporation. Ironically, the computer company ultimately turned to more a traditional media venue—an advertisement in the *Wall Street Journal*—to make a successful apologia.

Researchers have begun to examine crisis communication using empirical methodologies. Marcus and Goodman (1991) investigated changes in stock price in response to different types of corporate communications (defensive and accommodative) during and after different kinds of crises (accidents, scandals and product safety and health incidents). The field experiment found differences in the shareholder response, as measured by price of stocks, after defensive or accommodative statements by corporations. Generally, accommodative messages, in which management takes responsibility for an incident, served shareholders better after scandals, while defensive

strategies, including “denials of intention, volition, and agency” (p. 291), served shareholders better after accidents. The authors found no significant difference in shareholder response (as measured by stock prices) between the two strategies after product safety or health incidents.

Coombs (1999) tested the effect of different components of crisis management strategies on corporate reputation among a group of crisis managers. The results indicated a positive result of compassionate methods, as opposed to informative methods, on corporate reputation. Unfortunately, the subjects used, namely veteran crisis management professionals, drastically reduce the generalizeability of the study. The 114 managers who participated in the study had worked in the crisis management area for an average of about 10 years; the reactions of such a highly trained group of professionals in response to a crisis simulation can hardly be generalizeable to the reactions of the general population. They do serve to gauge the importance placed on compassionate communication by the professionals who are likely to respond to a corporate crisis situation, however, and underscore the likelihood of them employing such a strategy in the wake of a crisis.

Coombs and Holladay (1996) examined the fit between crisis type and crisis communication strategy, based on Benson’s (1988) symbolic approach. The symbolic approach posits that a corporation experiencing a one-time accident should attempt to distance itself from the accident (i.e. make an excuse), while a corporation experiencing repeated accidents or corporate transgressions should attempt to rebuild its image through remedial measures, such as victims being offered compensation for their injuries. Using

corporate image of a fictional corporation as the dependent variable, the results indicate that matching response type to crisis type improves reputational image among audiences.

Siomkos and Shrivastava (1993) used an experimental design to test the effect on reputation of two fictitious corporations of four types of crisis responses: denial, involuntary product recall, voluntary product recall and "super-effort," in which a corporation goes well above the legal requirements of a product recall to protect customers. The study found that existing company reputation influenced post-crisis attitudes, with high reputation companies viewed more positively after a crisis than low reputation companies. The results of the study indicate that subjects viewed crisis responses negatively (denial and involuntary product recall) or positively (voluntarily product recall and super-effort). However, there was only a minimal difference within the positive and negative categories: an involuntary product recall was almost as negative as a denial, while a voluntary product recall was almost as positive as a super-effort. The study underscores the importance of honestly assessing—and improving—corporate reputation in advance of a crisis, since low reputation companies need to use a very costly super-effort response in order to improve consumer attitudes toward the company after a crisis, while high reputation companies can use the less costly voluntary product recall strategy.

Arpan and Pompper (2003) examined the effect of a particular crisis communication strategy—"stealing thunder"—on a specific group of individuals, namely reporters and journalists. Stealing thunder is a proactive form of crisis communication, in which a corporation makes "an admission of a weakness (usually a mistake or a failure) before that weakness is announced by another party, such as an interest group or the

media" (Arpan & Pompper, 2003, p. 294). The researchers created a fictitious corporation and asked professional journalists and journalism students to respond to different corporate crisis scenarios in which public relations professionals communicated differently with journalists. Their findings indicated that while stealing thunder showed promise as a tool for building credibility for public relations professionals among an important target audience—the media—by increasing journalist's perceptions of public relations practitioners as credible sources of information, it also had the effect of imbuing the story with greater newsworthiness, thus assuring prominent coverage. This study is of particular interest because it looked at the impact of crisis communication strategies on a particular group, or culture. However, like the Coombs (1999) study, the subjects of the experiment limit the generalizeability of the results. That is not a fault of the research, since such generalizeability was not the authors' intention. The researchers were interested in the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists, not in the reactions of the public to the media produced by those journalists. The fact remains, however, that the empirical literature on public reaction to corporate apologia remains quite limited.

Although there is a growing body of literature on corporate apologia, mainly in the form of case studies of corporate crises, only a small portion of that research has been empirical in nature. The few empirical studies have confirmed some important aspects of crisis management theories, including the importance of appropriate self-defenses in rebuilding corporate image in the wake of a crisis. However, while theoreticians and researchers have posited a link between culture and acceptance of excuses (Hearit, 1999; Scott & Lyman, 1968), a search of the literature uncovered no empirical studies in this

area. This dissertation begins to fill a significant gap in the literature by examining the impact of culture on acceptance of corporate excuses.

Mass Communications and Impression Management

While initial work in the area of impression management, like that of apologia, came from the area of interpersonal relations, it has proven an effective framework for the study of organizational communications as well (Giacalone & Rosenfeld, 1989; see also Arndt & Bigelow, 2000; Bromley, 1993; Hooghiemstra, 2000). Studies in the area of impression management and organizational communications are varied, and have described both external and internal corporate communications, as well as target reaction to such communications.

Organizational Communications Studies

Researchers have employed a broad range of methodologies in the field of organizational communication and impression management, including case studies, content analyses, surveys, and experiments. Most of these have focused on self-presentation within the context of an organizational setting. Greenberg (1990) conceived of organizational justice as a function of self-presentation, suggesting that fairness is a "desired social identity" in the context of an organization. In addition to the intrapsychic benefits of creating a good self-image, Greenberg notes that the perception of fairness has the important benefit of enhancing a manager's power base within an organization. Additionally, an overall image of corporate fairness may serve to attract and retain qualified employees. Haas-Wilson (1990) used survey research to examine the association between well-informed recommendations and fees paid to psychotherapists. Wosinska, Dabul, Whetstone-Dion, and Cialdini (1996) used an empirical design to test

the effects of different self-presentational strategies, gender, and position in an organizational context.

A few studies have looked at entities as impression managers. For example, Arndt and Bigelow (2000) used qualitative content analysis to examine the way hospitals present accounts of corporate restructuring in their annual reports. Hooghiemstra (2000) used a case study method to examine the rationale behind one corporation's use of corporate social reporting to minimize the negative effects of environmentally suspect business practices.

Mass Communications Studies

Although there is a great deal of work in the field of mass communications based on the dramaturgical work of Goffman, particularly Kaid's "videostyle" studies in the field of political communication (Kaid & Johnston, 2001; see also Kaid, 2002; Kaid & Davidson, 1986), only a small body of literature exists in the field of mass communications that is directly informed by the theoretical framework of impression management (Sallot, 2002). Dominick (1999) studied self-presentational styles on personal Web pages using quantitative content analysis. Coding for Jones' (1990) self-presentation strategies—ingratiation, competence, intimidation, supplication and exemplification—he found that most personal Web pages could be categorized by the dominant self-presentation strategy utilized by the author. Ingratiation and competence were the self-presentation strategies employed most often by Web authors; supplication and intimidation were almost never used. Dominick concluded that self-presentation explained many of the cyber-behaviors in the study, including the use of feedback mechanisms (e-mail, guest books, site counters) and the inclusion of social associations through links. However, while Dominick studies mass media messages, in the form of

Web pages, the study is still closely linked to the interpersonal roots of impression management, studying self-presentational tactics of individuals in a mass mediated environment.

Papacharissi (2002) used content analysis to examine the design tools people use to achieve impression management goals on personal Web pages. For example, she viewed feedback mechanisms such as e-mail and guestbooks as a gauge of desire for social approval and hyperlinks as a gauge for need for affiliation and belonging. She noted differences in creativity and use of hyperlinks among different Web communities, and suggested that portals such as Geocities or Earthlink, may actually serve to mediate impressions by making templates available to community members. By utilizing all the "bells and whistles" of a high-end template, a person projects a competent, high-tech image. This study touches on the impression management of an entity in a mass mediated context, to the extent that the portals are responsible for the impressions made by a particular Web page. However, the focus of the study remained primarily individuals.

Sallot (2002) used an experimental design to test the effects of perceived motives (none, selfish, prosocial, altruistic), communications styles (one-way and two-way), and professionalism (licensed and unlicensed public relations professionals) on the reputation of public relations professionals. She found that perceived motives made a difference in how public relations professionals were regarded, with significantly better evaluations for those engaging in activities for altruistic reasons than for selfish ones. However, even when participating in projects for altruistic reasons, public relations professionals were still viewed as advocates for their corporate sponsors. Sallot suggests that this is related to the pre-existing "self-interest and intentionality components of public relations

advocacy" (p. 163). In other words, the general public already views public relations professionals as self-serving and strategic in their actions on behalf of their companies, so it is difficult to convince subjects that they are capable of working for purely altruistic reasons. Again, this study is more interpersonal than corporate in nature, albeit focusing on the impressions made by members of a mass media profession.

Corporate Identity

From an organizational standpoint, impression management is closely related to corporate identity. Hooghiemstra (2000) describes corporate identity as "the way the organisation presents itself to an audience" (p. 57). This is analogous to the concept of self-presentation in interpersonal communications, which is an attempt to control impressions of the self to an audience (Schlenker, 2002). An organization presents itself to an audience every time that someone uses the company's products or services, talks with one of its employees, or encounters any consequences from its corporate actions. Each of these interactions, therefore, involves some form of impression management.

Corporate communications are one tool organizations use to build corporate identity (Hooghiemstra, 2000). According to Van Riel (as cited in Hooghiemstra), corporate communications are "an instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonised as effectively and efficiently as possible, so as to create a favourable basis for relationships with groups upon which the company is dependent" (p. 57). Goodman (1998) suggests corporate communications includes such diverse communications functions as public relations, investor relations, employee relations, media relations, labor relations, philanthropy, training and employee development, and advertising.

Esrock and Leichty (1998) did look at the impressions made by entities—specifically members of the Fortune 500—on their corporate Web pages. Their content analysis found that corporate Web sites were used more for highlighting corporate good deeds than for promoting specific policy decisions. This indicates that the desired corporate identity is a socially responsible one. Their findings also suggest that few corporations used their Web sites to actively communicate with relevant publics. Apparently, the Web sites were not used to gather the feedback that is critically needed for successful impression management (Schlenker, 1980). The authors note, however, that their findings are likely "time-bound," since Web use by corporations was still at an "evolutionary" stage in the late 90s. With improved Web site design, such feedback may now be easier to collect.

Most organizational and mass communications studies in the area of impression management continue to look at individuals within organizations, rather than the impressions managed by the organization as a whole. However, it is usually the corporate entity, and not the individuals within that corporation, that makes the most direct impression on the consumers. This dissertation fills a gap in the organizational impression management literature, using an empirical design to study the effects of excuses offered by a corporate entity in the wake of an adverse incident.

One thing that is clear from the literature is that most of the studies in the area of organizational and media impression management have examined corporate communications, usually as the subject of content analysis. In essence, corporate communications are the manifest content of a corporation's identity—it is self-presentation committed to paper, videotape, or digital technology. While no empirical

studies of corporate impression management were found in the literature, this, along with the growing empirical literature in the field of crisis communications, suggests the appropriateness of using corporate communications materials as the stimulus material for investigating impression management in the corporate context.

Advertising and Impression Management

Advertising is a unique and very specific form of corporate communications. Advertising is defined as "any paid form of non-personal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor" (Belch & Belch, 1998, p. 14). To use the life-as-theatre analogy, an advertisement functions as a prop for an organization, which helps an audience understand who (or what) the organization is, what it stands for, and why it behaves in a particular way. Organizations choose to present themselves to an audience with advertising because (1) it gives them complete control over the message that they wish to communicate to an audience, and (2) it allows them to decide into which media vehicle, or setting, they put that message.

When organizations use advertising, they pay money to describe themselves in the *exact* way they wish to be described to a particular audience. Schlenker (1980) describes written self-descriptions as a direct way of claiming specific images that an actor wishes to claim. Advertising, therefore, must be seen as a very direct and not very subtle form of corporate identification. As such, it represents an important tool for the study of corporate identification and organizational impression management.

Problems with Advertising

From an organizational standpoint, advertising is an imperfect impression management vehicle, however. First, advertising is normally a one-way form of communication; aside from direct advertising (i.e., advertisements containing 800

numbers), a corporation gets no immediate audience feedback from its advertising messages. Martinko (1991) states, "Successful IM attempts require constant assessment of audience reactions and feedback" (p. 269). While the organization's goals for the advertising interaction are set in advance, advertising does not allow the organization to modify its message to ameliorate an unsuccessful interaction—a bad or offensive ad remains bad or offensive.

This potential problem is accentuated by the "permanent" nature of the advertising interaction, since a record of the interaction, usually in print or video form, can remain long after the interaction occurs. We can therefore presume that organizations go to great lengths to manage impressions right the first time when it comes to advertising. That is, we can assume that organizations are highly motivated to achieve desired corporate identifications through their advertising messages.

Second, advertising may suffer from the same problem that Sallot (2002) noted for public relations – namely, a lack of credibility. U.S. citizens comprise a sophisticated media market – they are highly aware that advertising is a paid form of communications, and they are increasingly wary of advertising claims (Belch & Belch, 1998). Therefore, a paid advertisement from a sponsor may seem less credible to the desired audience than a newspaper article containing similar information about the organization's views.

Advocacy Advertising

There is perhaps no time when it is more important for an organization to manage impressions right in an advertisement than when an organization is running advocacy advertising. Advocacy advertising, sometimes called issue advertising, is "concerned with propagating ideas and elucidating controversial social issues of public importance in a manner that supports the interests of the sponsor" (Belch & Belch, 1998, p. 536). As

such, it is a subcategory of corporate advertising, which is any form of advertising designed "to establish, alter or maintain a corporation's identity" (Schumann, Hathcote, & West, 1991).

Sethi (1979) originally used the term "advocacy advertising" to describe advertising

> concerned with the propagation of ideas and the elucidation of controversial social issues of public importance. It does so in a manner such that supports the position and interests of the sponsor while expressly or implicitly downgrading the sponsor's opponents and denying the accuracy of their facts. (p. 70)

However, Fox (1986) disagreed with Sethi's adversarial approach to the subject, and suggested that advocacy advertising be defined as "advertising which addresses an issue that can affect and can be influenced by actors beyond the advertising's sponsor" (p. 62). Fox's definition of "advocacy advertising," which encompasses a wide range of corporate advertising designed to express corporate opinions on a broad array of subjects with many relevant publics, will be used throughout this dissertation.

Because it is not product-oriented, Belch and Belch (1998) view advocacy advertising as an extension of an organization's public relations activities, rather than as an advertising function. Public relations is defined as "the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an organization with the public interest, and executes a program of action (and communication) to earn public understanding and acceptance" (p. 514). Advocacy advertising is a very direct attempt to earn public acceptance of an organization's views. Therefore, previous public relations research, more than advertising research, provides an appropriate framework for the study of corporate advocacy advertising.

According to Dardenne (1981), corporations employ advocacy advertising most often to correct public misconceptions in the wake of negative coverage by the press, and to give the public information that may help alter public policy decisions. Corporate advocacy advertising may be run proactively, in an attempt influence the opinions of important audiences in advance of some action or event. This type of advertising might be employed when a corporation wants to make its opinions known to legislators in advance of some vote that may impact its operations. Corporate advocacy advertising may also be run reactively, in response to some negative publicity or event. This type of advertising is often run in the wake of corporate actions that have impacted its publics in some negative way. For example, Connolly-Ahern and Kaid (2002) documented the use of this form of advertising by a number of corporations in the wake of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and by the U.S. Postal Service after the 2001 anthrax attacks. When advertising is run in response to some negative corporate event or predicament, it can be called "corporate account advertising." It is this type of advertising that is the subject of this dissertation.

Advertising Versus Public Relations

From a professional standpoint, one of the key benefits of public relations as a marketing communications tool is said to be increased credibility. Beckwith (2003), a well-known publicist writes, "...publicity is more powerful and more influential than advertising. That's because publicity is usually linked to newsworthy events or information that make it useful or interesting" (p. 3).

College-level textbooks offer similar opinions. Wilcox, Cameron, Ault and Agee, authors of *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics*, note that one of the most important functions of public relations is "providing third-party endorsements – via newspapers,

magazines, radio, and television – through news releases about a company's products or services, community involvement, inventions and new plans" (2003, p. 16).

These third-party endorsements come in the form of media gatekeepers, such as reporters, editors and producers, who transfer some of the credibility of the news vehicle to a news release once it has been vetted and included in a newspaper, magazine or news broadcast. Speaking about the relative credibility of new and traditional media, Hearit (1999) concludes the traditional media gatekeepers are an important element of credibility, suggesting that "when defending their reputations, companies are wise to couple their use of the new media with the use of traditional media because its employment of media gatekeepers confers to their message a legitimacy and credibility not yet available in cyberspace" (p. 303).

Scholarly work has made the same assumption: "An advocacy message, appearing in a print medium as purchased space, is likely to appear less credible than the same message appearing in the news columns as news" (Salmon, Reid, Pokrywckzynski, & Willet, 1985, p. 553).

However, the small body of work has examined the credibility and effectiveness of public relations tactics as opposed to advertising for advocacy messages is inconclusive. In an experimental study of the relative effectiveness of advertising and public relations tactics, Salmon et al (1985) reported that while news stories were judged less biased than advertisements for advocacy messages, in one case—that of the American Cancer Society—advertising was actually judged more trustworthy, interesting, informative, agreeable, and more in keeping with behavior intentions than the same information presented in a news format.

Working in the area of political communication, Zhao and Chaffee (1995) used survey data to study the relative effects of television news and campaign advertising on U.S. voter knowledge. Again, results were mixed. While the effects of advertising were generally less than the effects of news on issue knowledge, in one race—a high-profile race fought on either side of a deep ideological divide—the effect on issue knowledge attributable to advertising was greater than that attributable to television news.

Although organizations increasingly use advocacy advertising to take their messages directly to relevant publics, there is only a small body of work comparing advocacy advertising with more traditional public relations tactics. While public relations is generally believed to be more credible with audiences than advertising, there is no definitive empirical study stating that news stories are superior to advertising in delivering advocacy messages. Additionally, a search of the literature uncovered no study that looked at the topic of advocacy advertising from an international standpoint. This dissertation seeks to expand the small body of literature in this area of advocacy advertising and public relations effects, while expanding the discussion of the topic to the international arena.

Predicaments and Impression Management

In the wake of a negative event, an organization is faced with a predicament. From the impression management perspective, organizations are faced with predicaments anytime in which "events have undesirable implications for the identity-relevant images [they] have claimed or desire to claim in front of real or imagined audiences" (Schlenker, 1980, p. 125). A predicament can affect corporate identity to the extent that the corporation is perceived, by itself or its publics, as being responsible, or accountable, for the event in question (Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, & Doherty, 1994). The more

responsible a corporation is seen by itself and audiences for the negative event in question, the greater the threat to its corporate identity. Schlenker et al. (1994) suggest "responsibility is a necessary component of the process of holding people accountable for their conduct" (p. 634). In the organizational context, it is the conduct of the corporation itself that is in question.

Corporations and Predicaments

When faced with an identity-threatening predicament, organizations, like individuals, are likely to attempt to avoid the negative consequences of their actions by employing impression management tactics such as accounts and apologies (Schlenker, 1980). In response to predicaments, a corporation has five communications choices in the wake of an adverse incident. The first, of course, is not to communicate with any of its relevant publics. This is the classic legal approach of "no comment" (Fitzpatrick & Rubin, 1995). Once the organization decides to communicate, however, it can either issue some form of account (a defense of innocence, an excuse, or a justifications) or an apology.

From a communications perspective "corporate accounting" can be accomplished through a variety of communications channels, depending on the audience that the organization is targeting with its account: internal communications, annual reports, press releases, advertising, or any combination of these.

The Triangle Model of Responsibility

Deciding whether or not a corporation is responsible or accountable for some negative action involves "evaluative reckoning" in which the corporation is judged by its various audiences—consumers, government, shareholders, the press (Schlenker et al., 1994). Attribution theory suggests that audiences consistently request information from

specific domains to assess responsibility for an event (Weiner, Perry, Magnusson, 1988). The triangle model of responsibility offers one model for the information needed to judge an individual's or organization's responsibility for a negative event, based on information about three main components and the linkages or connections between them (Schlenker, Pontari, & Christopher, 2001; Schlenker et al., 1994).

According to Schlenker et al. (1994), the three main components of the triangle model are

> (a) the *prescriptions* that should be guiding the actor's conduct on the occasion, (b) the *event* that occurred (or is anticipated) that is relevant to the prescriptions, and (c) a set of *identity images* that are relevant to the event and prescriptions and that describe the actor's roles, qualities, convictions, and aspirations. (p. 634)

The relevant linkages of the triangle model, according to Schlenker et al. (2001), are

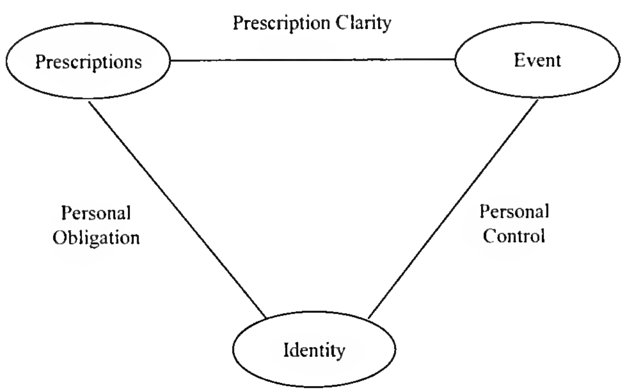
> (a) *prescription clarity*, the clarity of the prescriptions (goals, rules, and scripts) that are applicable in the situation, linking the prescriptions and the event; (b) *personal obligation*, the extent to which the actor appears to be bound by the prescriptions because of duty or other requirements, linking the prescriptions and the actor; and (c) *personal control*, the extent to which the actor seems to have control over the outcomes in the situation, linking the actor and the event. (p. 18)

The three components and the links between them form a triangle (Figure 1). The stronger the links between the three components of the model are, the greater the corporation's responsibility for the event in question will be judged by its audiences. Excuses are an impression management tactic employed by corporations in an attempt to weaken the links between the components, thereby lessening corporate responsibility for the events in question in the minds of the relevant audiences (Schlenker et al., 2001).

A number of studies have incorporated the triangle model to assess responsibility for adverse incidents. Wohl, Pritchard, and Kelly (2002) found that the relative responsibility assigned to employed, underemployed, and unemployed workers was

related to the perceived strength of the links of the triangle model, with a combination of strong prescription-identity and strong prescription-event links producing the highest perceived responsibility ratings.

One study related a common American cultural characteristic, Protestant Work Ethic (PWE), to attributions of responsibility using the triangle model (Christopher & Schlenker, in press). The researchers found that high PWE is related to holding people personally responsible for their actions, regardless of the excuses offered, as well as negative reactions after failure. Although this was not an intercultural study, per se, it suggests the triangle model is appropriate for measuring differences in reactions to excuses among different cultural groups.



Note. From "Excuses and Character: Personal and Social Implications of Excuses," by B.R. Schlenker, B.A. Pontari, and A.N. Christopher, 2001, *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 5*, p. 18. Copyright 2001 by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Figure 1. The Triangle Model of Responsibility

Types of Excuses

Each of the linkages in the triangle model can be weakened by specific kinds of excuses. Prescription clarity excuses claim that the goals, rules and standards pertaining to the event in question were unclear to the organization (Schlenker et al., 2001). Microsoft employed this kind of excuse in the aftermath of the Justice Department's anti-trust lawsuit against it. Microsoft claimed that there were no laws governing the creation of proprietary software, and that it therefore had no way of knowing that it might be considered illegal to create software that automatically disabled competitor's software upon installation.

Organizational obligation excuses claim that because of some attribute of the corporation, the normally expected prescriptions for the event do not apply to the corporation, regardless of how they may apply to others in a similar situation (Schlenker et al., 2001). While the basic values of fairness and equality might seem to weaken the effectiveness of this kind of excuse with audiences, it is possible to imagine a scenario where a corporation might employ such an excuse.

For example, a pharmaceutical corporation that produces mass quantities of vaccine for children might employ such an excuse. While it would generally be contemptible to create a product that might harm a child, vaccine producers are aware that there is a small risk that a child will become ill, or even die, as a result of being vaccinated with one of their products. However, because the vaccinations are required by the state, vaccinations are generally credited with saving far more lives than they harm, and the risk is widely understood by health professionals, pharmaceutical companies continue to make vaccine. Adverse incidents might be acknowledged with a press release indicating that the

company could not be judged by conventional standards of product liability, since it was obligated to produce vaccines that save countless lives.

Organizational control excuses claim that the corporation had no way to manage or direct the event in question (Schlenker et al., 2001). Usually, the event in question is attributed to external forces. United Airlines famously employed a series of control excuses in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Having lost two of its planes, along with crew and passengers, during the event, United Airlines responded to the negative publicity surrounding the event, and the subsequent fear of flying by the American people, with a series of advertisements that blamed the tragic events on an unnamed "they," who had attempted to take the joy of flying away from the highly committed company.

In rhetorical terms, excuses fall under the differentiation strategy of conflict resolution, because they seek to separate some piece of information—information on prescription clarity, personal obligation or personal control—from the larger context of the adverse incident (Ware & Linkugel, 1973). The goal of separating this information for the audience is to create audience understanding, which will decrease the likelihood of audience condemnation of the person or entity offering the excuse. If the person or entity offers the excuse along with positive information about itself or its connections with other entities, it is taking an explanative excuse posture. If the excuse is offered in combination with some kind of denial, the person or entity is taking an absolutive excuse posture.

While corporations may employ any of the types of excuses mentioned, some may be more credible with audiences than others. However, while the social psychology

literature contains a number of studies measuring the effectiveness of various accounting strategies (e.g., Benoit & Drew, 1977; Kane, Joseph, & Tedeschi, 1977; Riordan, Marlin, & Kellogg, 1983), the results have been mixed. According to Benoit (1995), only apology has been found to be generally effective as an image restoration strategy.

Furthermore, without a uniform typology of self-defense mechanisms, the results of these studies are difficult to compare (Benoit, 1995). The proposed experiment seeks to extend the literature in the area of credibility of accounts, by testing the relative credibility of narrow sub-category of self-defense strategies, excuses, which are likely to be employed by corporations in the wake of crises. This study further extends the literature through its examination of the acceptability of an account by a corporate entity, rather than an individual.

Problems with Excuses

People employ excuses when confronted with predicaments because excuses can be helpful in minimizing the negative repercussions of their mistakes (Schlenker et al., 2001). Snyder and Higgins (1988) suggest a number of intrapersonal benefits to using excuses, including helping those who employ them protect self-esteem and improve task effectiveness, while reducing anxiety and depression. Studies have also noted interpersonal benefits of excuses, including minimizing damage to the personal identity of the person making the excuse, as well as the reduction of sanctioning after an event, including reduced punishment in the wake of a crime (Critchlow, 1985). Relating the practice of public relations to excuse making, Schlenker et al. (2001) suggest, "The recent feature of the 'spin doctor' position in most large companies illustrates the importance of being able to provide creative, image-repairing excuses to the public" (p. 16).

However, while excuses may serve to protect identity in the event of a predicament, there are also risks associated with using them (Schlenker et al., 2001). In particular, Schlenker et al. suggest that excuses can undermine reliability of the actor using the excuse, which may lead to impressions of deceit, ineffectualness or self-absorption. However Keller (1998), who defines corporate credibility as "the extent to which consumers believe that a firm can design and deliver products and services that satisfy customer needs and wants" (p.426), claims that corporate credibility depends on three factors: trustworthiness, expertise, and likeability. Yet these are precisely the factors which may be undermined by excuses, as noted by Schlenker et al (2001).

Both Ohanian (1990) and Newell and Goldsmith (2001) suggest that of those three, expertise and trustworthiness are the most salient dimensions of corporate credibility. Excuses of any kind may therefore be related directly to diminished corporate credibility, with those that undermine expertise and trustworthiness the most damaging to corporate credibility. Coombs and Holladay (1996) suggest that expertise may be especially significant, noting, "Organizations that might be perceived as being able to prevent a crisis should have a more negative image [in the wake of a crisis] than an organization perceived to have little or no control over a crisis" (p. 293).

When making an excuse, especially in the advertising medium, it appears that corporations walk a thin line between wishing to minimize their responsibility for a particular incident or event, while protecting their corporate credibility and, ultimately, their corporate identity. United Airline's post 9-11 advertisements, for example, were very careful to leave the other two linkages extremely strong, however, emphasizing both United's deep commitment to safe flying (clarity) and its venerable position as a leader in

the airline industry (obligation). The ads featured actual employees of the airline giving personal testimonials about their love of flying and their commitment to the corporation, making United—and its employees—seem as trustworthy and likable as possible. This served to underscore United's corporate credibility, and to salvage as much as possible of United's corporate identity, in spite of facing a predicament that was in direct conflict with its desired corporate identity as an extremely safe and efficient airline.

Culture and Impression Management

Appropriate self-presentation is related to an individual's cultural mores. Leary notes, "Confusion and misunderstanding can arise when people from one culture engage in self-presentations that do not conform to the norm of another culture" (p.1996, p80). He says the subject has been inadequately explored in the impression management field, but suggests, "as our global society expands, we have increasing reason to understand cultural differences in self-presentation" (p. 80). Bond (1991) suggested, "One practical approach to examining cross-cultural variation in self-presentation is to examine differences in values around the world" (p. 197). However, while the need for intercultural research in the cross-cultural area is clear, a review of the literature could find no cross-cultural studies using the impression management theoretical perspective. This dissertation begins to fill an existing gap in the literature, improving knowledge of cultural differences in effects of impression management used by corporations in the wake of adverse incidents.

Cultural Dimensions

The nature of culture is a matter of great debate, even within the field of anthropology, which is charged with its study. In an early 1950s survey, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) identified more than 160 different definitions of the term. One of the

most comprehensive definitions in the field of anthropology comes from Kluckhohn (1951):

> Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values. (p. 86)

A few frameworks exist for the comparative study of culture (De Mooij, 2001). One of the most widely used is that of Dutch organizational anthropologist Geert Hofstede. Hofstede (2001), who based his cultural theories on a worldwide survey administered by IBM to its employees, describes culture as the "collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (p. 9). Culture includes language, attitudes toward elders, the physical distance preferred between individuals, and perceptions of basic human activities such as eating, sexual relations, and even defecation (p. 2). According to Hofstede, "culture manifests itself in visual elements," such as symbols, heroes, rituals and other practices. While these elements may be visible to people outside of the group, only people inside the group fully comprehend the cultural meanings of these elements, which remain invisible to a casual observer (p.10).

Advertising and journalism are visible elements of culture. Like any form of expression, they are the end product of a long process of message encoding and decoding that reflects the attitudes and values of the source that creates it—and is viewed through the attitudes and values of those who encounter it. Advertising and journalism can never be totally separated from the culture that produces them. They are social artifacts, and it makes sense that the study of advertisements must take into account the culture in which they were created, as well as the culture of those for whom it is meant.

Hofstede (2001) identified five independent dimensions of culture:

1. "Power distance (PDI), which is related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality" (Hofstede, 2001, p.29). Hofstede says that within organizations, "Power distance is a measure of the interpersonal power or influence between [an employer and an employee] as perceived by the less powerful of the two" (p. 83). He suggests that each culture has a norm for this level of interpersonal power, which is measured by PDI.
2. "Uncertainty avoidance (UAI), which is related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future" (Hofstede, 2001, p.29). Since uncertainty leads to anxiety, each society or culture must find a means for effectively dealing with uncertainty. According to Hofstede, "Ways of coping with uncertainty belong to the cultural heritages of societies, and they are transferred and reinforced through basic institutions such as the family, the school, and the state" (p. 146). Essentially, UAI is a societal measure of discomfort with ambiguity.
3. "Individualism versus collectivism (IDV), which is related to the integration of individuals into primary groups" (Hofstede, 2001, p.29). Basically, this refers to the relative importance of individual or group achievement in society. According to Hofstede notes, "The relationship between the individual and the collectivity of human society is not only a matter of ways of living together, it is intimately linked with societal norms" (p. 210). It is the balance of this relationship that is measured by IDV.
4. "Masculinity versus femininity (MAS), which is related to the division of emotional roles between men and women within a society" (Hofstede, 2001, p.29). The author explains that masculinity and femininity "refer to the dominant gender role patterns in the vast majority of both traditional and modern societies…the patterns of male assertiveness and female nurturance" (p. 284). MAS measures the level to which gender role patterns differ within countries, with high MAS meaning great differentiation, and low MAS (or femininity) meaning little differentiation.
5. "Long-term versus short-term orientation (LTO), which is related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present" (Hofstede, 2001, p.29). Long term orientation includes values such as persistence, observing status in relationships, thrift and having a sense of shame; short-term orientations includes values such as personal stability, protecting "face," respect for tradition and reciprocation of greetings, favors and gifts. This dimension is based on Bond's Confucian Values Survey, and has only been measured for a few non-Eastern cultures. Because information on LTO is available for only a few countries, it was not considered in this dissertation.

Each of the 53 countries in Hofstede's sample were positioned on a scale for each dimension, with the dimensions occurring "in all possible combinations, although some combinations were more frequent than others" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 29), underscoring the diverse cultural mosaic of the countries surveyed. Many researchers have found

significant correlations between Hofstede's cultural dimension scores and other external variables, including consumer attitudes and attitudes toward advertising.

Criticisms of Hofstede's Approach

A number of interpersonal and mass communications studies, as well as a wide range of studies in other areas, have employed Hofstede's cultural value system module as a framework for cross-cultural research (e.g., DeMooij, 1998b; Gudykunst et al., 1996; Tak, Kaid, & Lee, 1997; Taylor, 2000). However, some scholars have questioned the validity of Hofstede's findings.

Spector, Cooper and Sparks (2001) were unable to reproduce Hofstede's internal consistency statistics in their 23-country sample on either the individual or country/province level. Furthermore, their ANOVA results indicated only one of Hostede's variables, IDV, accounted for more than 10% of the variance in the replication of the values survey. Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener (2002) found that cultural values of individualism-collectivism were moderated on the individual level by gender, but gender differences are not considered within the structure of the Hofstede values.

The Hofstede Values System Module cannot be considered a perfect measurement tool of culture. First, because the Values Systems Module reports country-level means, it does not take into account the wide range of individual variation that exists within any country (Hofstede, 2002). Any convenience sample taken from a country is likely to differentiate extensively from the reported country means. This differentiation may be exacerbated when samples cannot be secured from different geographic areas within a given country.

Second, as Hofstede (2002) notes, matching of samples is critical to successful implementation of the Values Systems Module. However, perfectly matching a long set

of criteria, including but not limited to age, gender, education level, occupation, and socio-economic status, can prove daunting in a cross-cultural context, especially when international researchers are likely to have limited access to local populations, and samples are based on convenience rather than chosen in a systematic, random fashion.

Despite the problems of using the Hofstede measurements in cross-cultural research, hundreds of scholars from around the world have documented strong, significant correlations between the cultural values measurements and a diverse range of outside criteria, from purchases of mineral water to average waiting times for doctors and even the Nobel Prize index (Hofstede, 2001). The measurement is not perfect, but it the best one currently available, and its use is justified in the present study, especially in light of the growing body of communications and marketing literature utilizing the scale.

Culture and Communications

Noted U.S. American anthropologist Edward Hall said, "Culture is communication and communication is culture," (1959, p. 169). It is clear that communication, both interpersonal and mediated, is inseparable from culture—both of the sender and of the receiver. According to Gannon, "perhaps the most interesting feature of culture is that is triggers unconscious values leading to action" (2001, p.18). He indicates that culture is an important variable in the communication process, particularly in the realm of persuasive communication, such as business negotiations, where one party desires a specific outcome as a result of the reception of a communicated message.

Working in the field of interpersonal communication, Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) introduced a model of intercultural conflict management based on the culture-level variable of individualism-collectivism. Defining face as "a claimed sense of favorable social self-worth that a person wants others to have of her or him" (p. 187), the

authors note, "The dimension of individualism-collectivism serves as a conceptual framework in explaining why the meaning of "self" and hence, "face," varies across cultures" (p. 189). The essay includes suggestions for creating "intercultural facework competence" to enhance human dignity in the increasingly global environment.

Gudykunst (1997) notes that while most anthropological research takes an "emic" or specific approach, and most psychological research uses an "etic" or universal approach, communications research is derived from both the emic and etic viewpoints. In his introduction to a special issue of *Communication Research*, Gudykunst (1997) stated that Hofstede's cultural values provided a means for comparing similarities and differences in national communication styles. However, he cautioned that researchers should also attempt to take into account individual-level factors that might impact the influence of culture on communication style. Some individual-level measures that might account for differences in communications style include personal values, personality orientation, egalitarianism, and sex role orientation.

Culture and Advertising

According to Tak, Kaid, and Lee (1997)

> Many researchers agree that culture does affect the reception and acceptance of an advertising message; the advertising message therefore reflects the culture in which it appears. In communication...a sender's cultural background affects the overall message form, whereas the receiver's cultural background determines message perception. (¶ 2)

Their content analysis research found that, among other things, UAI was a good determinant of Korean and U.S. American political advertising styles.

De Mooij (2001) also used a content analysis of international advertisements to determine how cultural values are reflected in advertising. Additionally, she linked Hofstede's cultural dimensions to existing European consumer survey data. She found

significant correlations between consumer attitudes toward advertising and IDV and MAS (Hofstede, 2001). This indicates that these two values may be useful tools for developing advocacy advertising research.

According to De Mooij (2001), highly individualistic cultures, such as the one in the United States, tend to be universalistic, whereas collective cultures, like most of those in Latin America, tend to accept cultural differences of other groups, because they are comfortable with the idea that their group is different from all others. In terms of communications, De Mooij says this can be reflected in "assuming certain truths as self-evident and commenting on events in other parts of the world from [a] universalistic and ethnocentric point of view" (p. 79). She notes that this is often manifested in international advertising and marketing campaigns.

High MAS societies are ones in which performance and achievements are prized. These are the classic "bigger is better countries," including Japan, Germany, and the United States. While the United States is often thought to be a very masculine society, in actuality fourteen countries, including four Latin American countries—Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador—score higher than the United States on the MAS scale.

Low MAS societies are service- and people-oriented (De Mooij, 2001). All the Nordic countries fall into this category. In the Americas, Costa Rica, and Chile are found on the extreme low end of the MAS scale, and seven of the 13 Latin American countries score below the mean.

De Mooij (1998b) suggests that culture is not merely reflected in advertising. Rather, cultural fit is critical to an advertisement's success. This is because consumer needs, motives, product use, media behavior and attitudes are all linked to cultural values.

In particular, De Mooij found strong positive correlation between confidence in the advertising industry, Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance in a survey of European nations. In particular, she found that feminine countries weak in uncertainty avoidance reflect a deep skepticism of the exaggerations in advertising.

Content analysis reveals different advertising executions are correlated with the MAS dimension (De Mooij, 2001):

> The masculine/feminine dimension discriminates between cultures particularly with respect to values related to winning, success and status, which are much used in advertising appeals. It is therefore an important dimension for marketing and selling. It reflects the division between countries in which hype and the hard sell prevail and countries with a soft-sell, more modest approach. (p. 82)

Not all scholars have considered MAS critical to the understanding of advertising, however. Zandpour et al. (1994) and Zanpour and Harich (1996), for example, offered a model to assess cultural fit for advertising using Hofstede's cultural values, omitting the MAS dimension. However, Hofstede (1998) called the model incomplete because of the omission, which Hofstede considered a critical error in the area of advertising. He suggested the dimension was omitted from the model because of an American cultural bias against discussing gender, and noted, "It seems paradoxical that academics operating within a culture accustomed to focusing on facts, data, and truth can be so biased in their research approach" (p. 72).

Culture and Public Relations

According to Sriramesh and Verčič (2003), "Logically, culture should affect public relations and public relations helps alter culture" (p. 7). However, the authors note that researchers have only recently begun to explore the subject of culture and public relations.

Because public relations in general, and international public relations specifically, is a relatively new area of communications study, much of the work that has been done in the area of culture and public relations has focused on case studies and ethnographies (e.g. Sriramesh, 1996). In fact, *The Global Public Relations Handbook* (Sriramesh and Verčič, 2003) is written with one chapter about each country, with very little comparative work attempted. Some comparative work has been done (e.g. Sriramesh, Kim, & Takasaki, 1999; Taylor, 2000), but an extensive review of the literature revealed no cross-cultural public relations research that is experimental in nature.

Culture and Excuses

The MAS dimension may be important in a culture's relative willingness to accept excuses. According to Hofstede (1998), feminine cultures are more permissive than masculine ones. In particular, Hofstede found a strong negative correlation between an index for permissiveness, based on the European Value Systems study, and masculinity. That is, people in feminine countries were found to be more accepting of a list of vices that included joyriding, soft drugs, accepting bribes and prostitution than their counterparts in more masculine countries. It seems reasonable, therefore, that individuals from feminine countries might accept excuses more willingly than their counterparts in masculine countries.

Additionally, masculine countries are known to hold success and winning in high regard. While feminine countries show sympathy for the weak, masculine countries show sympathy for the strong (Hofstede, 2001). Due to their success orientation, masculine cultures may prove less forbearing and accepting of excuses offered by corporations in the wake of an adverse incident because of their general lack of patience with failure.

Of course, it is logical to assume that other cultural values are also related to the acceptance of excuses. For example, Hofstede (2001) notes that one characteristic of high uncertainty avoidance cultures is pessimism about organizations' motives. Taylor (2000) linked uncertainty avoidance, power distance and organization-public relationships in a cross-cultural case study about the aftermath of a Coca-Cola tainting scare in Western Europe. High uncertainty avoidance/high power distance countries, including Belgium, France, and Spain, were distrustful of the corporation after the scare, and quickly pulled Coca-Cola from the shelves, while weak uncertainty avoidance, low power distance countries such as Sweden, Norway, and Denmark waited for conclusive evidence of tainting before recalling Coca-Cola's products. Taylor's observations have implications for this dissertation, suggesting that Spanish audiences may be particularly distrustful of large corporations. It should be noted that while Spain does rank very high in uncertainty avoidance, its power distance ranking (31) is considerably lower than that of either France (15/16) or Belgium (20).

A review of the literature indicates that there is reason to believe that cultural values will influence acceptance of excuses. Additionally, culture has already been shown to influence the reception of corporate communications messages emanating from the advertising and public relations tradition. However, an extensive review of the literature uncovered no studies testing either of these propositions empirically.

Hypothesis and Research Questions

Given the research reviewed in the areas of impression management, dimensions of culture and mass communications, two hypotheses and a number of research questions were formulated. The experimental method of this dissertation was designed to answer those questions, and to seek confirmation of those hypotheses.

Hofstede (2001) suggests that people who live within a group are "programmed" to react to events or actions in similar ways. Scott and Lyman (1968) specifically suggest that acceptance of excuses may be related to culture. However, to date no empirical studies have analyzed the relationship between cultural values and corporate credibility.

RQ1: What is the relationship between Hofstede's cultural values and the credibility of corporate excuses?

Schlenker et al. (2001) offer a typology that includes three kinds of excuses. However, there is no evidence in the impression management literature indicating which kinds of excuses are most likely to be credible with audiences.

RQ2: Which types of corporate excuses—prescription clarity, personal obligation or personal control—are most credible with audiences?

Authors such as Belch and Belch (1998) and Beckwith (2003) indicate that advertising may suffer from a general lack of credibility. However, a search of the literature revealed mixed results that fail to validate this claim.

RQ3: Are corporate excuses offered in advertising less credible than the same excuses offered within the context of a news article?

RQ4: What is the relationship between Hofstede's cultural values and the relative credibility of excuses offered in advertising and within the context of a newspaper article?

De Mooij's (1998a) research indicates that high MAS cultures view advertising more positively than low MAS cultures. Hofstede (2001) indicates that masculine cultures have more confidence in advertising than feminine cultures.

H1: Overall, members of higher MAS cultures will find excuses offered in advertising more credible than members of lower MAS cultures.

Conversely, Hofstede (2001) indicates that feminine cultures are more permissive and nurturing than masculine cultures. This indicates that excuses, once given, should be better honored in feminine cultures than in masculine cultures.

H2: Overall, there will be less difference in credibility scores after an adverse incident in low MAS cultures than in high MAS cultures.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This posttest only with control group (Babbie, 1998) experiment was designed to determine which kinds of excuses are most credible with audiences from different cultural backgrounds. This was done by exposing subjects to three corporate accounts of an adverse incident that were manipulated to give a different kind of excuse for the same event—one of clarity, one of obligation, and one of control. Audiences received the corporate account in one of two print media forms: an advertisement or in the body of a newspaper article. To begin the exploration of the relationship between Hofstede's dimensions of culture and corporate credibility, the experiment was run in two different countries, the United States and Spain. As illustrated by the cultural dimensions of these countries, which are outlined in Table 1, the two countries offer wide contrast, in terms of rank-order, on three of the four variables under study; the country ranks differ by at least twenty places in all categories except for power distance, where the difference in rank is only 7 places.

Table 1. Hofstede's cultural values indices and ranks for Spain and the United States

Country	**Power Distance**	**Uncertainty Avoidance**	**Individual/ Collectivism**	**Masculinity/ Femininity**
Spain	57/31	86/10-15	51/42	42/37-38
United States	40/38	46/43	91/1	62/15

From *Culture's Consequences*, by Geert Hofstede, pp. 500-501. Copyright 2001 by Sage Publications, Inc.

Research Design

The cover story for this experiment was based on a corporate crisis—an explosion—at the Winnipeg, Canada (for U.S. participants) or Cordoba, Argentina (for Spanish participants) production facility of a fictitious multi-national chemical corporation called "MultiChem Corporation." The two cities were chosen because they were deemed to be secondary, industrially oriented cities in countries with which participants would be familiar but were not so large as to have many participants have personal acquaintances in either of them, as might have been the case in Toronto or Buenos Aires. The experimental materials consisted of a "scrapbook" of media related to MultiChem. The first three pieces in each scrapbook included materials designed to create a credible image for the fictitious corporation; the fourth item informed participants about an adverse incident at a MultiChem facility in a foreign country; and the fifth item offered a corporate excuse for the incident. Recruited participants from each country were randomly assigned to one of six experimental conditions. Each scrapbook was followed by a one-page questionnaire consisting of 16 semantic differential scale items designed to assess the credibility of the fictitious corporation.

Stimulus Materials

Materials were first created in English, translated into Spanish by a native Spanish speaker fluent in both English and Spanish, and then back-translated by another fluent, tri-lingual speaker to ensure the translations were sound and that the original meaning was not lost.

All participants received corporate communications and news materials that underscored the expertise of MultiChem in its particular area of chemistry, as well as the trustworthiness of the corporation. These included three items. First, a page that appeared

to be a printout of the company's Internet homepage. This homepage was designed by a commercial designer who modified the elements from the Web sites of major chemical corporations, including BASF, Dow Chemical, DuPont and Hoechst, to increase the authenticity of the stimulus. The text and graphics were designed to create an image of a highly credible corporation, highlighting the traits of trustworthiness and expertise. To highlight trustworthiness, the site contained links for "Environmental Policies," as well as a link for "Philanthropy." The mission statement highlighted the fact that the company was "dedicated to discovering and implementing the most environmentally friendly processes possible." To highlight expertise, the site referred to the corporation as an "innovator" operating on six continents. The Latest News link included headline about new marketing initiatives in New Zealand, and a new research facility in India. (Appendix A).

The next two pieces were mock articles from fictitious newspapers: the *Winnipeg Times* or *Cordoba Hoy*. The first article, entitled "CAS honors MultiChem Scientists," ("ACA honra a científicos de MultiChem," in Spanish), focused on the expertise of the corporation, listing the numerous awards received by MultiChem scientists, including a "Nobel Prize for their identification of an enzyme that aides in composting of agri-industrial waste," (Appendix B). The second article, entitled "City greets new MultiChem Research Center," ("Se inaugura nuevo centro de investigación de MultiChem," in Spanish), focused on the company's trustworthiness, detailing its 30-year commitment to the Winnipeg or Cordoba community, through charitable donations totaling more than $165 million for "students, disabled citizens, single mothers, needy children," among others (Appendix C).

A control group went directly from the corporate communications materials to the corporate credibility scales to determine the baseline credibility of the fictitious corporation.

All participants aside from those in the control group next read what appeared to be a copy of a newspaper article from the same fictional newspaper entitled "Explosion injures 3, evacuates 100s," ("Explosión deja a 3 heridos, cientos de personas evacuadas" in Spanish). (Appendix D). The article described the "late night" explosion in neutral terms, giving factual data about injuries and evacuations. No sources are cited directly; a statement from MultiChem was anticipated at a morning news conference. An accident was chosen because it was deemed to be relevant to testing issues of responsibility and credibility arising from excuses (Appendix D). The scenario was similar to the one used by Coombs (1999) to test the effectiveness of instructing information and compassionate messages in crisis communications.

Next, each participant received a corporate account of the incident. These were either in the form of advertisement from the MultiChem (the advertising condition) or contained within a newspaper article in which a corporate spokesperson was quoted (the news story condition), offering an identical excuse.

Crisis Communication Elements

The elements included in the crisis communications were derived from Barton's (1993) list for using communication as a management tool. The audience for the communication was local citizens and opinion leaders in the affected communities of Winnipeg or Cordoba. The goal of the communication was to restore MultiChem's credible image in the local community. The tone of the message was conciliatory, yet upbeat. The content of the message included facts meant to reduce fears in the local

community, as well as assurances that the incident would not be repeated. The messages assumed that the receivers would have had knowledge of both the corporation and the incident. The source for the communication was a corporate "vice president." No additional credentials were given, aside from those of the company in the earlier corporate communications materials.

The materials were designed to minimize the influence of external factors on the honoring of the excuses. Therefore, no comments were offered by either community leaders or governmental agencies either against or in support of the corporation.

Implementation of the Triangle Model

To ensure that the excuse treatments did not differ in tone, the same introductory paragraphs and closing paragraphs were included in each excuse. Using Ware and Linkugel's (1973) typology, the company's posture was explanative. That is, it sought both to bolster its image, reminding the audience that the corporation has been a good corporate citizen, improving quality of life for citizens, and to put distance between the corporation and the event. The excuses were the distancing mechanism.

Newspaper stories included introductory paragraphs noting that company officials had "identified the cause" of the explosion, along with a statement that the company had assured a local governmental agency that there was "no health risk to the community" and no chance that the incident would be repeated. The excuse appeared as a statement from a company official made to "reporters." A concluding paragraph gave the reader some general information about MultiChem, including the global scope of its operations and its long history in either Winnipeg or Cordoba.

Each ad or newspaper article employed one of the three types of excuses derived from the triangle model: prescription clarity, organizational control and organizational

obligation. The prescription clarity excuse stated that the explosion was the result of an unanticipated interaction between two chemicals that were previously thought to be safe when used together, but which the company has now determined are only safe when used below a certain temperature (the clarity excuse condition). The personal obligation excuse stated that the company uses volatile chemicals because of important work they do under contract for the government following strictly prescribed procedures, and that the government had assured them of the safety of the chemicals before they undertook the work (the obligation excuse condition). The personal control excuse stated that the company has determined that the cause of the explosion was a faulty valve in a holding tank, which caused a chemical reaction between two chemicals that never should have been allowed to interact (the control excuse condition) (Appendices E-G).

Measurement

After reading the corporate excuse, each participant was asked to answer a 16-item semantic differential scale constructed for this dissertation (Appendix H). The items chosen were derived from previously used credibility scales. The items included in the current measurement instrument were those that were deemed to best represented the trustworthiness and expertise measures in the various scales. Duplicate measures were eliminated and wording was modified to create a scale of bi-polar items, rated on a 7 point scale.

The first was scale used was Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz's (1970) Source Credibility Scale (Appendix I). The scale employs a 15-item randomly ordered and reversed bi-polar adjective scale, representing three distinct factors: safety, qualification, and dynamism (Rubin, 1994a). While some have argued that the scale is not generalizeable (Applbaum & Annatol, 1972; Cronkhite & Liska, 1976), it has been widely used by communications

scholars in both the interpersonal and mass communication fields since the 1970s, and has also served as a starting point in the creation of other scales (Rubin, 1994a).

The second scale used was McCroskey's (1966) 12-Item Semantic Differential Scale (Appendix J), which was derived from both rhetorical and social psychological frameworks (Rubin, 1994c). This scale was chosen because it has been used in numerous communication studies, including some that examined the impact of culture-related variables on source credibility, including rate of speech and gender (Wheeless, 1971), nonverbal cues (Arnold, 1973) and social status and dialect (Bochner & Bochner, 1973). Coombs and Holiday (1996) adapted this scale to measure corporate image for an experiment assessing the fit of crisis type and crisis communication strategy.

The third scale used was Gaziano and McGrath's (1986) News Credibility Scale (Appendix K). Unlike the Berlo and McCroskey scales, which were developed for the study of interpersonal communication, Gaziano and McGrath developed this instrument for the study of mass communication messages, specifically news articles. The scale was originally created for the American Society of Newspaper Editors, who sponsored a study of local print and television journalism (Rubin, 1994b). A modified version of this scale was recently used by Ferguson (2003), to gauge the relative credibility of alignment advertisements of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations (Appendix L).

The fourth scale used was Newell and Goldsmith's (2001) Corporate Credibility Scale. This is an eight-statement, 7-point Likert-like scale, specifically designed for the study of corporate image. Newell and Goldsmith describe corporate credibility as "the extent to which consumers feel that the firm has the knowledge or ability to fulfill its claims and whether the firm can be trusted to tell the truth or not" (p. 235). The

researchers sought to remove elements from previous credibility scales that made little sense in a corporate context, such as "sexiness" and "handsomeness." Therefore, this scale focuses on two components of source credibility: expertise and trustworthiness (Appendix M).

Sample

The time frame for recruiting and data collection was between March and April of 2004. The Spanish data was collected on March 9 and 10, 2004. The dates of this collection are particularly important in light of the March 11, 2004, terrorist bombings at the Atocha train station in Madrid, Spain. Since all of the data were collected before the bombings occurred, it does not serve as an intervening variable in this study (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). However, as will be discussed in the Limitations section of this dissertation, the events of "11-marzo," as it is known in Spain, may have significantly affected the attitudes of Spaniards toward the rest of the world in general, and foreign corporations specifically, in the short time since the data were collected.

The sample consisted of undergraduate students from large, academically competitive universities, one in the southeastern United States (n = 214) and two in central Spain (n=223). Although every effort was made to ensure the equivalency of the two groups, it must be acknowledged that this research, like most cross-cultural research, suffers because it is almost impossible to ensure group equivalence across cultures. Under these circumstances, this dissertation methodology is appropriately termed a quasi-experiment (Stacks & Hocking, 1992).

Students were recruited from communications classes in both locations and offered extra credit toward their grades in the class in return for their participation in the experiment. While this recruiting method introduces the possibility of selection bias in

the sample, Babbie (1998) indicates that this is an acceptable form of recruiting for exploratory research like that undertaken in this study.

Procedure

Students were randomly assigned to one of the six excuse conditions upon arrival at the testing site. Cells were not conducted individually. Instead, scrapbooks were randomly ordered using a random number table (Table of Random Numbers, n.d.) prior to conducting the experiments, and distributed to students at the test site. The full experiment took approximately 15 minutes to complete; the control group took only about ten minutes.

Because the control group was to fill out the credibility scales directly after the corporate communication and mock news articles underscoring MultiChem's expertise and trustworthiness, the control groups were conducted separately from the other cells. While this may introduce the possibility of selection bias into the results (Babbie, 1998), there is no reason to believe that the group of students selected to complete the control questionnaire in either country was materially different from the other students recruited to fill out the other conditions.

Analysis

First scale items were subjected to factor analysis. The resulting credibility scores were analyzed using a 2 (country—Spain or United States) x 2 (format—ad or newspaper) x 3 (excuse—clarity, obligation, control) factorial ANOVA.

To assess the impact of the cultural variables on credibility scores, Hofstede's cultural values scores from the country of origin of the participants – MAS, IDV, UAI and PD—were considered. Each nationality score was evaluated as either "high" or "low," according to the relative values assigned by Hofstede to Spain and the United

States. All Spanish participants, therefore, were considered low masculinity, low individuality, high uncertainty avoidance, and high power distance condition, by virtue of their country of origin, without any individual-level testing for those variables.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

The reliability coefficient for the sixteen-item corporate credibility scale was .9540 (Cronbach's α). Control group (n=57) means for scale items ranged between 4.77 (*SD*=1.36) ("doesn't/does make truthful claims") and 5.72 (*SD*=1.21) ("amateur/expert") on a 7-point scale, indicating that the stimulus materials succeeded in creating a moderately credible image for the fictitious corporation. Table 2 summarizes the control group means and standard deviations for all scale items.

Table 2. Control Group Means for All Scale Items

	Mean (n=57)	**Std. Deviation**
Amateur/Expert	5.72	1.21
Inexperienced/Experienced	5.70	1.18
Unqualified/Qualified	5.68	1.02
Passive/Active	5.65	0.88
Poorly Trained/Well Trained	5.58	1.08
Unconcerned/Concerned About Community	5.58	1.13
Bad/Good	5.40	1.05
Unjust/Just	5.11	1.06
Don't Like/Like	5.05	1.19
Dangerous/Safe	5.04	1.19
Poor/High Quality Goods	5.02	1.13
Unbelievable/Believable	5.02	1.40
Dishonest/Honest	4.98	1.17
Not Trustworthy/Trustworthy	4.93	1.21
Chief Concerns Profit/Well-being	4.89	1.40
Doesn't/Does Make Truthful Claims	4.77	1.36

Factor Analysis and Scale Creation

All scale items were subjected to principal components factor analysis, employing a VARIMAX rotation with Kaiser normalization. Factor analysis of the sixteen items yielded two distinct factors. Eigenvalues for the factor analysis appear in Table 3a; the rotated component matrix scores are contained in Table 3b. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .957, indicating a high degree of intercorrelations among the data. This was expected, since the instrument created for this study was derived from a number of other scales that had already exhibited high reliability in measuring credibility. According to Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, "The [measure of sampling adequacy] measure can be interpreted with the following guidelines: .80 or above, meritorious; .70 or above, middling; .60 or above, mediocre; .50 or above, miserable; and below .50, unacceptable" (p. 99). The results indicate that factor analysis is appropriate for the data set.

Table 3a. Factor Analysis: Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues	
Component	**Total**	**% of Variance**
1	9.569	59.804
2	1.119	6.995
3	.768	4.799
4	.640	4.000
5	.554	3.464
6	.489	3.058
7	.453	2.829
8	.397	2.478
9	.333	2.081
10	.330	2.065
11	.309	1.933
12	.250	1.562
13	.231	1.444
14	.199	1.245
15	.183	1.145
16	.179	1.099

Table 3b. Rotated Component Matrix Scores for Corporate Credibility Scale Items

	Component	
	Factor 1	**Factor 2**
Not Trustworthy/Trustworthy	.804	.376
Bad/Good	.773	.365
Dishonest/Honest	.768	.339
Don't Like/Like	.766	.348
Doesn't/Does Make Truthful Claims	.745	.358
Unjust/Just	.717	.486
Chief Concerns Profit/Well-being	.708	.201
Unbelievable/Believable	.696	.459
Dangerous/Safe	.649	.297
Unconcerned/Concerned	.637	.465
Amateur/Expert	.316	.812
Unqualified/Qualified	.411	.766
Inexperienced/Experienced	.295	.764
Poorly Trained/Well Trained	.297	.731
Poor/High Quality Goods	.377	.647
Passive/Active	.346	.640

The two factors that emerged from the dataset were anticipated by the theoretical framework of the study (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001; Ohanian, 1990). Factor 1 was characterized as "trustworthiness." Bi-polar scales items that loaded high in trustworthiness included "not trustworthy/trustworthy" (.804), "bad/good" (.773), "dishonest/honest" (.768), "don't like/like" (.766), "doesn't make truthful claims/makes truthful claims" (.745), "unjust/just" (.717), and "is concerned about making profits/is concerned about the public interest" (.708).

Factor 2 was characterized as "expertise." Bi-polar scale items that loaded high in expertise included "amateur/expert" (.812), "unqualified/qualified" (.766), "inexperienced/experienced" (.764), and "poorly trained staff/ well trained staff (.731).

To validate the results of the factor analysis, a second factor analysis of a random sample of 50% of the original sample was performed (Hair et al., 1998). This confirmed the stability of the factor analysis results, yielding two similar factors and achieving a

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy of .947. Eignenvalues for the confirmatory analysis appear in Table 4a; the rotated component matrix scores for the confirmatory factor analysis are contained in Table 4b.

Table 4a. Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues	
Component	**Total**	**% of Variance**
1	9.753	60.957
2	1.291	8.071
3	.799	4.993
4	.587	3.669
5	.524	3.277
6	.456	2.849
7	.409	2.557
8	.350	2.188
9	.346	2.164
10	.275	1.720
11	.248	1.548
12	.230	1.435
13	.221	1.384
14	.207	1.294
15	.159	.995
16	.144	.899

Table 4b. Rotated Component Matrix Scores for Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Corporate Credibility Scales

	Component	
	Factor 1	**Factor 2**
Not Trustworthy/Trustworthy	.824	.324
Doesn't/Does Make Truthful Claims	.807	.224
Dishonest/Honest	.799	.309
Chief Concerns Profit/Well-being	.760	.183
Good/Bad	.756	.398
Don't Like/Like	.749	.397
Unjust/Just	.732	.476
Unbelievable/Believable	.714	.407
Unconcerned/Concerned	.682	.439
Dangerous/Safe	.660	.428
Amateur/Expert	.254	.838
Inexperienced/Experienced	.217	.821
Unqualified/Qualified	.428	.776
Poorly Trained/Well Trained Personnel	.334	.763
Passive/Active	.384	.608
Poor/High Quality Goods	.452	.600

The results of the factor analysis were used to create two summated scales. Benefits of summated scales include their ability to represent multiple dimensions of a construct with one measure and their generalizeability (Hair et al., 1998). While many different methods of creating summated scales have been suggested, the most straightforward method is to add the responses of variables that loaded highest on a factor and using the total as a replacement variable with which to measure the desired construct; this was the method employed in this dissertation. Scale items with loadings greater than .7 on each factor were therefore included in the scales; no scale items had loadings greater than .7 on both factors. Each subject's responses to each of the scores included in either factor were added together to create two variables: trustworthiness and expertise. A preliminary analysis of the Trustworthiness scale indicated that reliability would increase with one variable, "is concerned about making profits/is concerned about the public interest," removed. The item was removed from the summated scale.

The reliability coefficient for the 6-item Trustworthiness scale was .9314 (Cronbach's α). A split-half reliability test yielded an alpha of .8661 for the 3 items in part one, and an alpha of .8821 for the 3 items in part two.

The reliability coefficient for the 4-item Expertise scale was .8836 (Cronbach's α). A split-half reliability test yielded an alpha of .7378 for the 2 items in part one, and an alpha of .8487 for the 2 items in part two.

Reliability of both summated scales was deemed good. The summated scales derived for the factor analyses were deemed to have both content and construct validity, reliably measuring two established aspects of corporate credibility, trustworthiness and expertise. The two dependent variables for the primary analysis were therefore

"trustworthiness," and "expertise." Constituent measures of the two summated scales are listed in Table 5.

Table 5. Constituent Measures of Summated Scales

	Summated Scale	
	Trustworthiness	**Expertise**
Constituent items	Bad/Good Don't Like/Like Dishonest/Honest Doesn't/Does Make Truthful Claims Unjust/Just Not trustworthy/ Trustworthy	Inexperienced/Experienced Poorly Trained/Well Trained Personnel Unqualified/Qualified Amateur/Expert
ANOVA Results		
F	28.1313	12.0918
Prob.	.0000	.0000
Cronbach's α	.9314	.8836
Scale mean	26.5423	19.7757

To test for discriminant validity, the trust and expert sums were subject to bivariate correlation. The discriminant validity test was inconclusive, indicating that the measures were positively, but not perfectly, correlated, r (N=437)=.728, p=.01(two-tailed). This correlation was expected, since trustworthiness and expertise are known to be correlated aspects of corporate credibility (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001).

Preliminary Analysis

Because the experiment was meant to test differences between Spanish and American subjects, all subjects who listed their nationality as "other" were eliminated from the subsequent analysis (N=420). The remaining subjects consisted of 220 Spaniards (42% males and 58% females) and 200 Americans (37% males and 53% females), reflecting the predominance of females in communications programs, both in Spain and the United States.

One-way ANOVA between the control group and all experimental subjects indicated that experimental subjects judged MultiChem both less trustworthy, $F\,(1, 419) = 15.881, p = .000$, and less expert, $F\,(1, 419) = 27.144, p = .000$, than the members of the control group. This indicates an effect of the experimental treatments.

Another preliminary one-way ANOVA indicated no main effect of gender on both trustworthiness, $F\,(1, 419) = .423, p=.516$, and expertise, $F\,(1, 419)=.000, p=.989$. Overall, males rated MultiChem as no more trustworthy (n=220, M=26.16, SD= 7.74) or more expert (n=220, M=19.77, SD= 4.63) than females (n=200, M=26.65, SD= 7.33, and n=200, M=19.77, SD= 4.68, respectively). Therefore, gender was not included as a factor in the primary analysis for either dependent variable[1].

Primary Analysis

Both trustworthiness and expertise were analyzed using a 2 (country—Spain or United States) x 3 (excuse—clarity, obligation, control) factorial ANOVA x 2 (format—advertisement or newspaper article). Table 6 illustrates the results of the factorial ANOVA on trustworthiness, including significant interactions. Table 7 illustrates the results of the factorial ANOVA on expertise.

Effects of Culture

Research question 1 asked about the relationship between Hofstede's cultural values and the credibility of corporate excuses. With regard to trustworthiness, Tables 6 and 8 show a main effect on nationality, with Spanish subjects reporting lower trustworthiness ($M = 21.882$) for MultiChem than American subjects ($M = 30.626$),

[1] Subsequent analysis of variance on both the trustworthiness and expertise variables, including gender along with the nationality, excuse condition and media format conditions, indicated no main effect of gender on either variable. One interaction, between excuse type and gender, proved significant, with females in the control excuse condition finding MultiChem significantly less trustworthy than males, $F\,(2, 365) = 3.370, p = .036$.

$F(1,365) = 182.896$, $p=.001$. Nationality had no significant interactions with any other factor.

It appears that culture does impact the perceived trustworthiness of a corporation in the wake of an adverse incident. In Hofstede's terms, it appears that members of a low masculinity, low individuality, high uncertainty avoidance, high power distance culture, such as Spain's, perceive a corporation as less trustworthy in the wake of an adverse incident than members of a culture that is high in masculinity, high in individuality, low in uncertainty avoidance, and high power distance, such as the United States.

Table 6. Factorial Analysis of Variance for Trustworthiness

	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Main Effects			
EXCUSE	53.536	1.421	.243
FORMAT	57.951	1.538	.216
NATION	6891.901	182.896	.000
Interactions			
EXCUSE*FORMAT	108.039	2.867	.058
EXCUSE*NATION	31.775	.843	.431
FORMAT*NATION	73.247	1.944	.164
EXCUSE*FORMAT*NATION	9.799	.260	.771

R Squared = .360 (Adjusted R Squared = .340)

Table 7. Factorial Analysis of Variance for Expertise

	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Main Effects			
EXCUSE	52.675	3.054	.048
FORMAT	2.877E-03	.000	.990
NATION	1463.203	84.831	.000
Interactions			
EXCUSE*FORMAT	12.439	.721	.487
EXCUSE*NATION	10.206	.592	.554
FORMAT *NATION	17.082	.990	.320
EXCUSE*FORMAT*NATION	1.712	.099	.906

R Squared = .214 (Adjusted R Squared = .190)

With regard to expertise, the ANOVA analysis (Tables 7 and 8) indicates a main effect of nationality (F (1, 365) = 84.831, p = 000), without any significant interactions. Thus it appears that, regardless of excuse or delivery format, culture impacts the perceived expertise of a corporation in the wake of an adverse incident. Table 8 indicates that the respondents in Spain (a low masculinity, low individuality, high uncertainty avoidance, high power distance culture) perceive a corporation as less expert (M = 17.452) than do respondents in the United States (M = 21.481), which is rated as a high masculinity, high individuality, low uncertainty avoidance, high power distance society.

Table 8. Corporate Credibility by Culture

	Spain (n = 220)	**U.S. (n = 200)**
Trustworthiness*	21.882	30.626
Expertise*	17.452	21.481

* Analysis of variance indicates that the difference between Spain and U.S. is significant at p<.001

Effects of Excuse Type

The second research question asked which kinds of corporate excuses were most credible with audiences. As illustrated in Table 6, there is no main effect of excuse type on trustworthiness (F (2, 365) = 1.421, p = .243). However one interaction, between excuse and format, approached significance (F (2, 365) = 2.867, p = .058).

Controlling for nationality, subjects in the control excuse condition who read the excuse in an advertising format found MultiChem more trustworthy (M = 27.570, SD = .814) than those who saw the same excuse in a news format (M = 24.617, SD = .764). Subjects in the clarity excuse condition who read the excuse in an advertising format found MultiChem's trustworthiness about the same (M = 26.673, SD = .822) as those

who saw the same excuse in a news format (*M* = 27.307, *SD* = .718). There was also little difference between the advertising and news conditions for subjects in the obligation excuse condition (*M* = 25.721, *SD* = .807, and (*M* = 25.636, *SD* = .761, respectively). The interaction is illustrated in Figure 2.

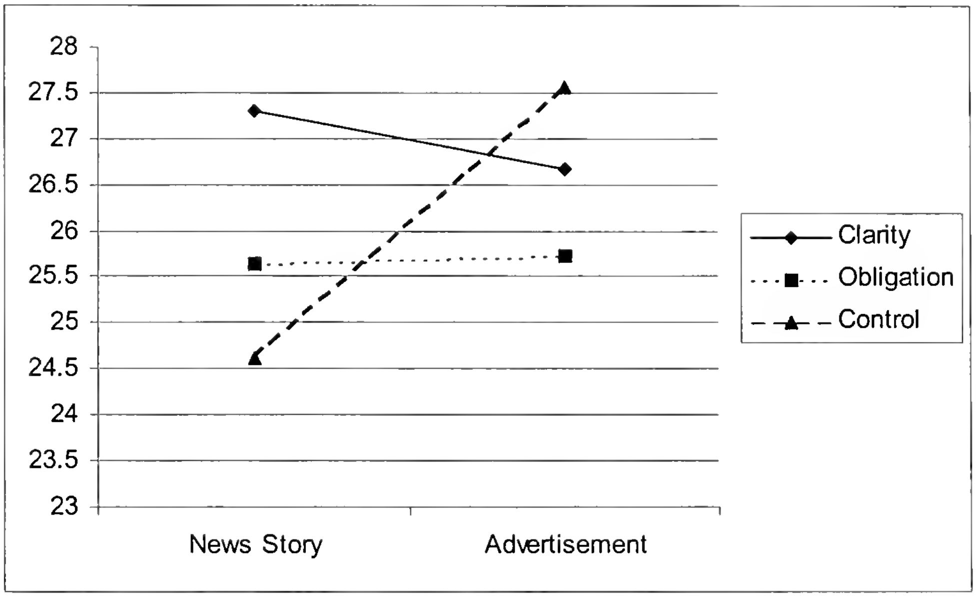


Figure 2. Estimated Marginal Means of Trustworthiness by Excuse Condition

In a scaled-down model, controlling only for nationality, ANOVA indicates a main effect of excuse on trustworthiness (F (2, 365) = 3.115, p = .046). However, ANOVA indicates no main effect of medium, controlling for nationality only (F (2, 365) = .000, p = .985). Nationality achieves significance at the $p < .001$ level in both of the smaller models.

Table 7 indicates a main effect of excuse type on expertise (F (2, 365) = 3.054, p = .048). Controlling for nation, gender and medium, subjects' judgments of MultiChem's expertise varied based on the excuse offered for the adverse incident. The results indicate that subjects exposed to a personal control excuse judged MultiChem

more expert than those exposed to prescription clarity or personal obligation excuses. Table 9 illustrates the means for excuse type on trustworthiness and expertise.

Further one-way ANOVA of the 16 original scale items by excuse type showed only two significant differences in overall means: "inexperienced/experienced" (F (2, 364) = 3.127, p = .045) and "amateur/expert" (F (2, 364) = 3.450, p = .033). Subsequent t-tests revealed that subjects exposed to the personal control excuse judged MultiChem more experienced, t (240) = 2.371, p=.019 (two-tailed), and less amateur, t (240) = 2.621, p=.009 (two-tailed), than subjects exposed to the prescription clarity excuse.

Table 9. Types of Excuses and Corporate Credibility

	Trustworthiness	**Expertise**
Prescription Clarity	26.990	19.043_{a}
Organizational Obligation	25.679	19.128_{b}
Organizational Control	26.094	$20.229_{a,b}$

a, b items with same subscript are significantly different from other items in that column, according to Tukey's HSD test

Effects of Delivery Format

The third research question asked if corporate excuses offered in advertising are less credible than the same excuses offered within the context of a news article. One-way ANOVA indicated no main effect of delivery format on either trustworthiness (F (1, 364) = 1.666, p = .198) or expertise (F (1, 364) = .039, p = .843). The results of the ANOVA analysis fail to indicate that overall advertising is less credible than a news story for delivering a corporate advocacy message.

The fourth research question asked about the relationship between Hofstede's cultural values and the relative credibility of excuses offered in advertising and within the context of a newspaper article. Tables 6 and 7 indicate that controlling for nation and

excuse type, there is no evidence of a main effect of delivery format on either trustworthiness (F (1, 365) = 1.538, p = .216) or expertise (F (1, 365) = .000, p = .990) of corporations based on advocacy messages in the wake of an adverse incident. The data indicate no relationship between Hofstede's cultural variables and the relative credibility of excuses offered in advertising or within the context of a newspaper article.

Table 10. Effect of Excuse and Format on Corporate Credibility

	News Story	Advertisement
Trustworthiness		
Prescription Clarity	27.307	26.673
Organizational Obligation	25.636	25.721
Organizational Control	24.617	27.570
Expertise		
Prescription Clarity	19.883	18.703
Organizational Obligation	18.825	19.431
Organizational Control	20.200	20.527

Subsequent t-tests on the 16 original scale items by delivery medium reveal only two significant differences in format means: subjects in the advertising condition judged MultiChem more likeable, t (378) = 2.322, p=.021 (two-tailed), and more active, t (378) = 2.699, p=.007 (two-tailed), than subjects exposed to the news story condition.

Table 11. Corporate Credibility of Advertising Condition Subjects by Culture

	Spain (n = 90)	**U.S. (n = 81)**
Trustworthiness*	22.73	30.57
Expertise*	17.67	21.27

* Analysis of variance indicates that the difference between Spain and U.S. is significant at p<.001

Credibility of Advertising in Different Cultures

Hypothesis one suggested that members of higher MAS cultures such as the United States would find excuses offered in advertising more credible than members of lower

MAS cultures, such as Spain. This hypothesis was supported. One-way ANOVA of those subjects in the advertising condition (n=171) indicates that, as expected, U.S. subjects found excuses offered in advertising both more trustworthy (F (1, 171) = 63.745, p = .000) and more expert (F (1, 171) = 32.197, p = .000) than Spanish subjects.

Honoring of Excuses

Hypothesis two suggested there would be less difference in credibility scores after an adverse incident in low MAS cultures, such as Spain, than in high MAS cultures, such as the United States. To test this hypothesis, subjects were recoded as either "control group" or "experimental group." A 2 (condition—control or excuse) x 2 (nation—Spain or U.S.) ANOVA was used to determine whether or not there was a significant interaction between the two national groups before the adverse incident (the control group) and after the excuse was offered (the experimental group), indicating a difference in excuse honoring.

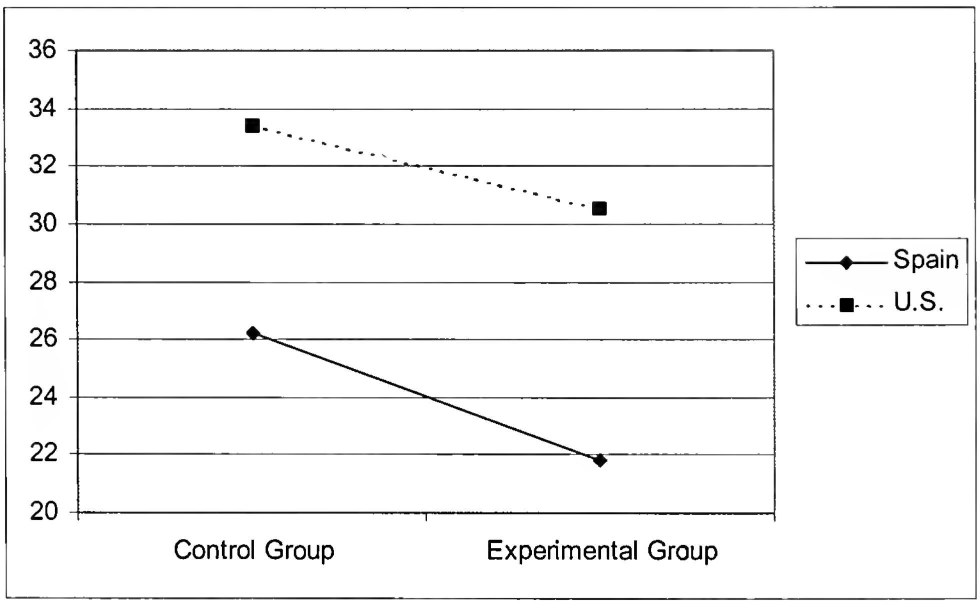


Figure 3. Estimated marginal means of control and experimental groups on trustworthiness by nationality

Hypothesis two was not supported. Although the data indicate a main effect of both nation (F (1, 420) = 82.988, p = .000) and condition (F (1, 420) = 17.201, p = .000) on trustworthiness, there is no indication of an interaction between condition and nation on trustworthiness (F (1, 420) = .819, p = .366).

Likewise, while the data indicate a main effect of both nation (F (1, 420) = 46,385, p = .000) and condition (F (1, 420) = 27.490, p = .000) on expertise, there is no indication of an interaction between condition and nation on expertise (F (1, 420) = .003, p = .954).

As Figures 3 and 4 indicate, the lines between the two nations are close to parallel, signifying that members of the low MAS Spanish culture did not honor excuses better than members of the high MAS American culture.

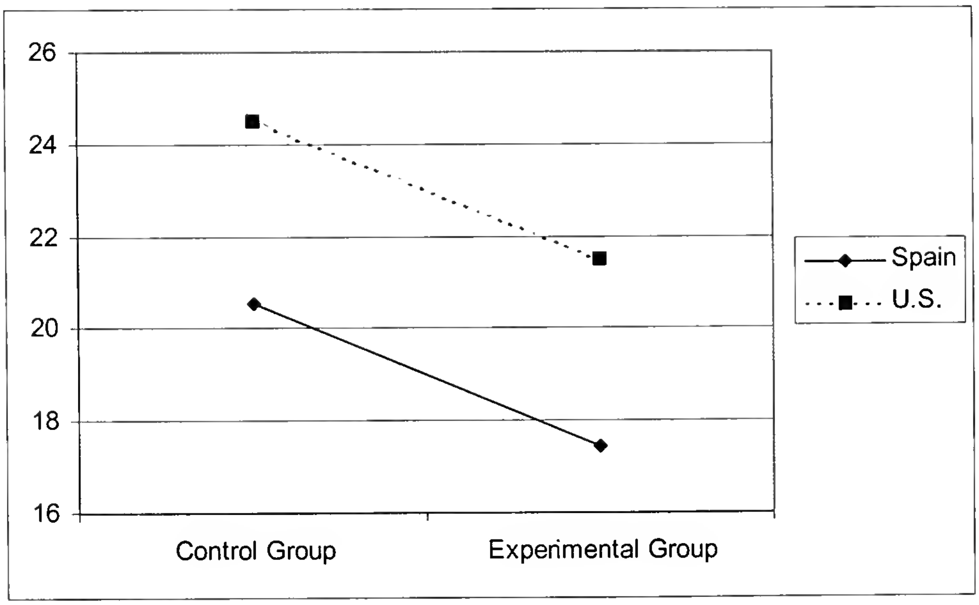


Figure 4. Estimated marginal means of control and experimental groups on expertise by nationality

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

The MultiChem scenario used in this dissertation was designed to mirror the corporate events that are routinely covered in local, national and even international media. MultiChem, a large but unassuming multinational chemical corporation, used corporate communications—a Web site, press releases, and local events—to create a moderately positive image for itself. It was regarded as both trustworthy and expert in its field of endeavor, due to its environmentally conscious policies, its philanthropic efforts, and its many awards for scientific accomplishment.

However, despite the company's best efforts, there was an explosion in an industrial facility. Some employees were injured, and many people were inconvenienced. The media immediately reported the events. In impression management terms, MultiChem faced a difficult predicament.

In the wake of the disaster, the company investigated the explosion, found out why it happened, made sure it would never happen again, and then responded to the predicament by offering an account to the public, in an attempt to recover a portion of its corporate identity—that of a trustworthy, expert member of the community—that was denied it by the adverse incident.

The most important question for MultiChem is, what is the likely response of audiences to its account? The findings of this dissertation indicate that while a corporation will likely suffer some damage to its credibility in the wake of an adverse

incident, the extent to which its credibility is diminished hinges both on the cultural values of the individuals being asked to accept the excuse, the type of excuse the corporation offers, and to a lesser extent, the media format in which the excuse is presented.

The Impact of Culture

Findings indicate that the fictitious company began with lower credibility in Spain than in the United States. This finding was not surprising. Taylor's (2000) study of European governments' reactions to The Coca-Cola Corporation after a tainting scare indicated that the combination of high PDI and high UAI translated to a distrust of authority figures in the wake of a potentially harmful incident.

It is easy to imagine that a powerful, multinational corporation, especially in the chemical industry, where there is large opportunity for harm, could be an object of distrust after a damaging incident. However, this experiment, unlike Taylor's case study approach, extends this information. It appears that corporations may not need to have an adverse incident to warrant distrust in certain cultural contexts—they actually come into any given situation with a presumed lack of credibility, relative to other cultural contexts, such as that of the United States.

The findings reveal that there was an overall significant effect of knowledge of the adverse incident on credibility, even after an excuse was made, in both Spanish and U.S. samples. Both trustworthiness scores and expertise scores were diminished among members of the experimental conditions, relative to those in the control group. Any knowledge of an adverse incident seems to lessen credibility, no matter what excuse is given. As Schlenker et al. (2001) note, "…excuses have a potentially large downside because of their possible impact on character and all it entails for personal and group

achievement" (p. 21). This study indicates the types of excuses may have a large impact on organizational reputation and achievement as well.

This study found that nationality was the most significant predictor of evaluations of trustworthiness and expertise. The Spanish subjects found MultiChem less credible than their American counterparts, controlling for both the type of excuse given for the explosion and the media format in which the excuses were delivered. Although some scholars, such as Schimmack et al. (2002), have indicated gender effects mediating culture, this study offered no evidence of any main effect of gender on corporate credibility in the wake of an adverse incident.

In its support of hypothesis one, the study indicated that excuses made in advertising would lead to greater credibility in high MAS cultures than in low MAS cultures. This substantiates DeMooij's (1998b) claims. However, it must be noted that this finding is tempered by the fact that Americans found MultiChem more credible than Spaniards in every condition. While it is confirmatory, it is certainly not conclusive.

The second hypothesis, that excuses would be better honored in low MAS Spain than in the high MAS United States, was not supported. There was no interaction between the control or experimental conditions and nationality on either trustworthiness or expertise, indicating that MultiChem did not experience a better recovery in either cultural setting after it offered its excuse. In fact, these findings indicate a remarkably similar pattern of declining credibility in the wake of an adverse incident and excuse that appears more dependent on a corporations' baseline credibility going into a corporate crisis than the cultural vantage point from which the crisis is judged.

The Impact of Excuse Type

The findings indicate that excuse type affected the two dimensions of corporate credibility—trustworthiness and expertise—differently. There was no main effect of excuse type on trustworthiness, controlling for nationality and medium. However, there was a near-significant interaction of excuse and medium, controlling for nationality. In the control condition, in which subjects were told that the explosion was beyond the organization's control because of a faulty valve, those subjects who received the excuse in the form of an advertisement found the corporation more trustworthy than those who received the excuse in the form of a newspaper article.

Since the findings indicate that subjects exposed to the advertising condition judged MultiChem more "active" than those exposed to the news story condition, it may be that the proactive move of taking out an advertisement had the effect of making the corporation less "helpless," and therefore more solid and stable, despite its lack of control over a very dangerous situation. Conversely, passively waiting for news coverage of the event may have exacerbated the perception that the corporation was not in control of the situation, and should not be viewed as trustworthy.

The interaction also indicates that subjects exposed to the clarity excuse (in which the corporation had no way of knowing that the explosion would occur because no scientific literature had predicted it) in a news story format found the company more trustworthy than those exposed to the control excuse in the news story format, although this difference only approached significance. This may be an indication of the media gatekeeper effect posited by Hearit (1999). Because the clarity excuse was dependent on scientific information, it may have seemed more credible because reporters and editors, who had presumably checked the company's facts, had vetted it. The control excuse, in

which the corporation blamed a faulty valve made by another company, may not have benefited as much from the traditional media gatekeepers, appearing as a case of "he-said-she-said" reminiscent of the Ford/Firestone tire public relations disaster, in which the companies used the press to blame each other for malfunctioning tires on some car models.

The study did find a main effect of excuse on expertise. Those in the organizational control condition found MultiChem more expert than those in the prescription clarity and organizational obligation conditions, controlling for nationality and delivery format.

It seems logical that having built an expert corporate identity, there was more damage to MultiChem's perceived expertise from an excuse claiming a lack of knowledge about a scientific concept than from an excuse claiming that the explosion was beyond the control of the corporation. Schlenker et al. (2001) suggest that "excuse makers run the risk of appearing ineffectual when their excuses deny personal control over events or they claim to be unknowledgeable about or indifferent to relevant goals, rules, and scripts, especially under circumstances where such control, knowledge, and commitment are normally expected" (p. 23). In MultiChem's case, it appears that the result of the corporation's excuse claiming lack of knowledge was reduced credibility, in the form of diminished expertise by those exposed to that excuse, relative to those exposed to the other two excuse types.

What remains unclear, however, is why scapegoating another corporation (the organizational control excuse) was more effective than scapegoating the government (the organizational obligation excuse), by claiming there was a flaw in a government-mandated process. Aligned to the problems with the clarity excuse, it may be that there is

a belief that the government's scientists shouldn't make mistakes. However, it may be that there is simply a lack of credibility in doing government work.

The Lack of Impact of Delivery Format

Perhaps the most surprising finding of this study was a lack of superiority of the news story condition for creating a credible corporate image in the wake of an adverse event. Controlling for country and excuse type, there was no main effect of delivery format on either trustworthiness or expertise. Of the two items in the original scale that evidenced a significant difference between delivery formats, the study found that advertising created a more credible corporate image than the context of a news story. Especially interesting was that subjects exposed to the advertising condition found MultiChem significantly more likeable than those in the news condition. This may be due to a number of external criteria, such as the pleasant layout of the advertisements, which contained both graphics and an easy-to-read type size and font. However, given the sample—college aged students of "the most mediated generation"—the subjects may have felt more positive attitudes toward a corporation spending the time and money to put together an advertisement to speak directly to an audience. Conversely, the advertising may have "associative" credibility, since it has already been included in a newspaper—that is, students may have assumed that the advertisement was "true," simply because a newspaper had chosen to run it.

Implications

The main implications of the study are threefold. First, culture affects the perceived credibility of an organization. Multinational corporations—or more specifically the public relations professionals that work for them—need to be aware that the corporate identity they work so hard to create may translate into very different corporate images in

different cultural settings. Appropriate assessment of baseline credibility in each cultural setting in which the corporation has a significant presence appears to be a crucial public relations function. Any adverse event is likely to diminish hard-won credibility.

This study indicates that the level of corporate credibility at the end of a corporate crisis is directly related to its level going into the crisis. Therefore, proactive public relations aimed at improving corporate credibility before an adverse incident, especially in cultural settings where corporate credibility is known to be low, may serve as a form of "damage control" in the wake of a corporate crisis. Hofstede's cultural values may ultimately serve as one indication of likely baseline corporate credibility, but far more research is necessary. At present, improving environmental monitoring capabilities in countries with significant, relevant publics appears to be the only recourse of multinational corporations wishing to better understand their position in host countries.

Second, some excuses offered in response to an adverse incident may benefit credibility more than others. Judgments of expertise were lower when a corporation offered a prescription clarity or organizational obligation excuse than when it offered organizational control excuse. For corporations' whose profitability rests on their perceived expertise, such as those in the pharmaceutical, high-tech, or medical industries, the effects of an excuse based on a lack of prescription clarity may prove especially costly. Although it remains to be tested, there may be times when offering an apology may serve a corporation better than trying to excuse the incident. At the very least, corporations that have built their reputations upon being "expert" in their fields should understand the potential downside of attempting to excuse an adverse incident with a prescription clarity excuse.

Third, advertising may be a more effective delivery format for advocacy messages than generally believed. While public relations professionals may shy away from using advertisements because of they believe they lack credibility, this study did not find that to be the case. In fact, there may even be some advantages to using advertising, since the study showed that subjects exposed to excuses in advertising judged MultiChem more likeable and more active than those exposed to the news story condition. In particular, corporations facing charges of "inactivity" or a "lack of community involvement" might consider using advertising to give them a more active and likeable image.

While it may be suggested that the results in the advertising condition benefit from the overall credibility of the news medium in which the ad was supposedly placed, the implication for corporations is the same. At the very least, with no measurable difference between the two formats, it may be advantageous to use advertising in situations where having complete control of the message is essential to advancing a corporation's interests.

Limitations and Future Research

As in all studies, this one has a number of limitations, some of them quite important to note. Additionally, it serves as a starting point for a number of other inquiries.

Limitations

The first and most important limitation of the study stems from the methodology of the study itself: experimentation. While testing conditions may consistently produce specific results, the external validity of the results is not proven. This experiment was specifically designed to test the impact of only a few variables on corporate credibility, minimizing the effects of external variables. Under real world conditions, on the other

hand, hundreds of additional external factors would impact perceived credibility in the wake of an adverse incident.

Some external agents have been shown to impact corporate credibility. As Siomkos and Shrivastava (1993) note

> Consumers place much value on how observers and agencies external to the firm react to a company's handling of a crisis. External agents, such as the media, regulatory agencies, local and state officials, and civic leaders, provide information and neutral comment to the public. Consumers are more likely to view a troubled company favourably, if these social agents respond positively. (p. 72)

Although information about external agents was minimized by design in this study, it is difficult to state with certainty a measure of generalizeability for this study.

As Arpan and Pompper (2003) point out, a major problem with experimental research in the crisis communication area is that in a real world scenario, previous history with the corporation would impact credibility. For example, a lifetime Craftsman tool and Kenmore appliance user who has been happy for years with Sears' service and guarantees is likely to react differently to a job dispute in a local store than someone who has had a bad experience with an employee at the same store. For one customer, the negative event is an aberration; for the other, it may be confirmatory. While the use of a fictitious corporation afforded an opportunity to minimize extraneous variables, it also reduces the generalizeability of the current study.

In the case of this study, history may prove a threat to generalizeability as well. Tragically, the Atocha bombings occurred the day after the data collection for this dissertation was completed in Madrid, Spain. The September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon resulted in increased patriotism and increased isolationism in the American public, at least temporarily. It is reasonable to assume that the traumatic experience of the bombings may have changed Spaniards' views about the

world in general, and foreign organizations specifically, since the data were collected. However, how that change would impact the current findings is unknown.

The MultiChem scenario itself is a limitation of the study. First, because it involves a corporation from only one industry—wholesale chemicals—the results may not be generalizeable to other industries, such as foods and household products. In fact, knowledge of past incidents in the chemical industry may have reduced the credibility of the corporation, especially in Spain, where baseline credibility was much lower than in the U.S.

Additionally, the number of students to which the researcher had access in Spain limited the scope of the research. The number of students did not allow for a cell testing the effects of information about the incident alone, without an excuse. Although much research in the area of social psychology has indicated that excuses minimize the impact of a predicament, the current project does not indicate how much they help, only the relative credibility of the corporation in their wake.

The small amount of time that the students were available to meet with the researcher also limited the scope of the research. Although a number of professors both in Spain and the United States generously allowed the researcher access to their classes, the relatively short time that could be spared by the professors precluded a more extensive demographic questionnaire, including information about pre-existing attitudes toward corporations in general, and the chemical industry specifically.

The stimulus materials may also have impacted results. Subjects saw representations of newspaper articles, advertisements and the corporate Web page in a different form than the one in which they would normally be encountered.

Advertisements appeared alone on a page, while in a normal print environment they would have been surrounded by editorial copy. This may have impacted credibility scores. Additionally, without the direct contrast of surrounding editorial, the advertisement may have had greater prominence than it would have in the context of an actual newspaper. Conversely, subjects could not explore the Web site as they normally would; they simply saw an image of the homepage, and had to guess at the content they would encounter if they followed the links. Its impact may have been decreased by the nature of the stimulus materials.

Another limitation of the scenario is that it tested only one rhetorical posture: explanative. According to Ware and Linkugel (1963), apologiae derive their persuasive power from one primary posture. However, it is possible a different posture, combining differentiation with denial instead of bolstering for example, may have changed the results. In addition to excuses, the impact of apologies and justifications, the two other major responses to predicaments (Schlenker, 1980), remain untested. It is possible that the same information presented in combination with one of these strategies, as is often the case in real world “accounting,” would have had a different effect on the subjects.

As with any cross-cultural research, the inability to perfectly match samples must be seen as a limitation of the study. Hofstede (2002) notes that matching of samples is critical to successful cross-cultural research. However, perfectly matching a long set of criteria, including but not limited to age, gender, education level, occupation, and socio-economic status, can prove daunting in a cross-cultural context, especially when international researchers are likely to have limited access to local populations, and samples are based on convenience rather than chosen in a systematic, random fashion. It

is hoped that by using students of similar age, educational level and socio-economic status, such limitations are minimized in this study. However, the question of student generalizeability to their cultural populations at large remains.

Finally, in its current form it is impossible to see whether Hofstede's cultural variables are impacting results, and if they are affecting results, which are most important. For example, while prior research has shown a link between MAS and advertising and tolerance of wrongdoing, a two-culture sample cannot by itself prove a proposition. Hofstede's variables, while correlated, are thought to work independently. To adequately test the four variables in Hofstede's Value Survey Module, assigning their mean scores to members of each culture, at least four culture groups are required for "quadrangulation." At best, this study begins to document the impact of culture on corporate credibility after an adverse incident. However, the root causes of observed differences cannot be explained with certainty.

Future Research

Future research should expand the cultural groups measured with the scale created for this dissertation, to better evaluate the instrument itself, as well as the impact of Hofstede's cultural variables on corporate credibility in the wake of an adverse event.

A research design including more than one type of organization or excuse posture would increase the generalizeability of future studies. While including additional treatments involves recruiting additional subjects, which can be a difficult task in the international arena, the increased information drawn from such studies would be of great use to the academic and professional communities alike. It would be especially helpful to include a cell examining the effect of knowledge of the incident alone, without any form of corporate excuse. It would also be useful to expand the demographic information

collected from subjects, including information about pre-existing attitudes toward particular industries.

Another avenue of research might test the relative effectiveness of various corporate voices offering excuses on trustworthiness and expertise in different cultural settings: local versus national or international spokespeople, high-level vs. low-level corporate executives. This research would be useful to transnationals attempting to choose the most appropriate spokesperson in a given country in the wake of an adverse incident.

The experimental design could also be used to test the "country of origin" effect, to determine whether and to what extent some countries are judged more harshly than others in the wake of an adverse incident. Different levels of variables such as physical and cultural proximity, past positive or negative history and extent of trade relations could be tested, providing important information for transnational corporations.

Finally, future research should allow subjects to encounter stimulus materials in a more natural way. Allowing subjects to use a computer to navigate a Web site for information about a corporation, and then use the information they gathered to answer questions about corporate credibility would better simulate the real world decision processes that go into assessing responsibility for an adverse incident.

Conclusion

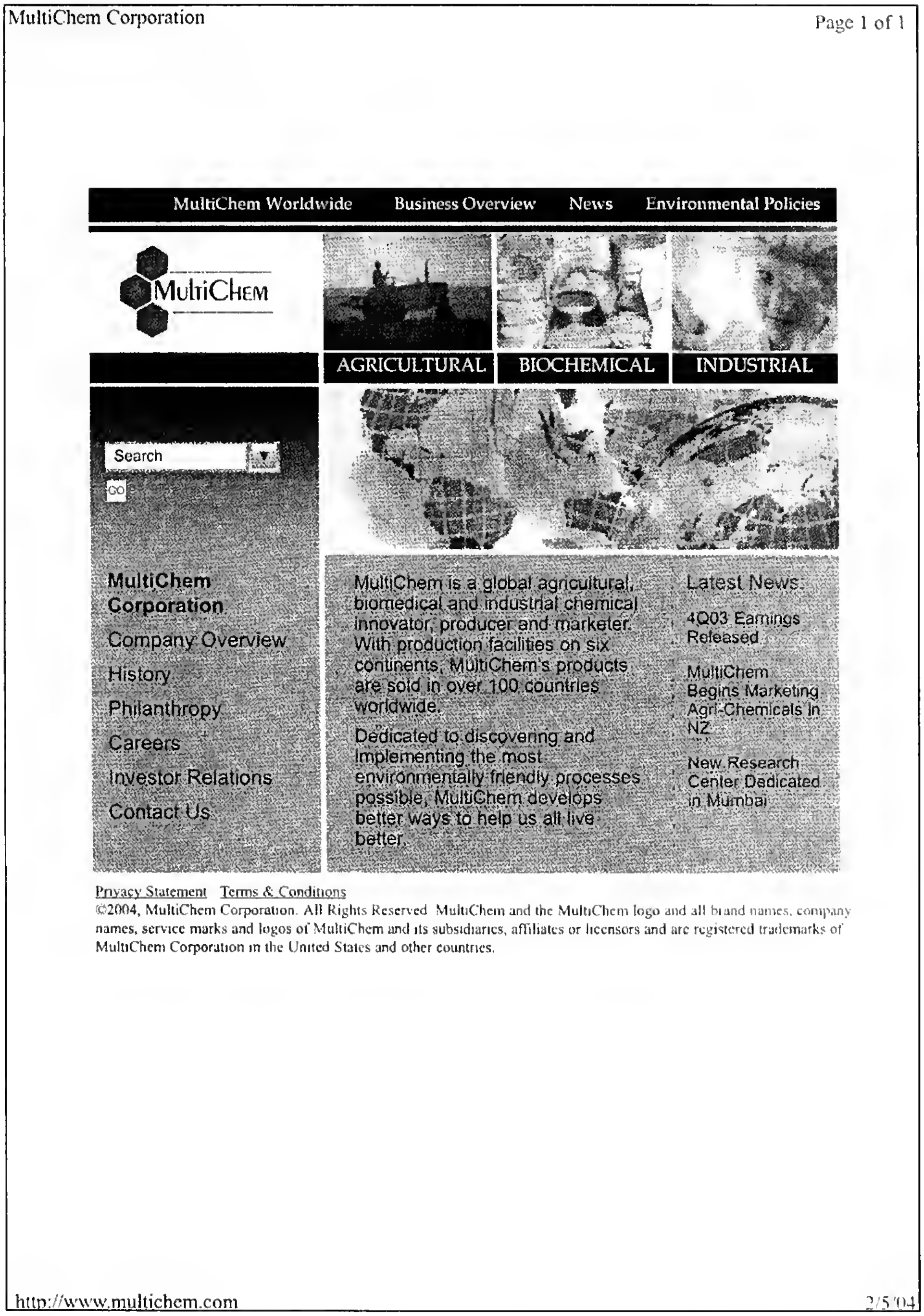
This dissertation used the theoretical framework of impression management, specifically the triangle model of responsibility (Schlenker et al., 1994), to study the impact of culture, excuses and media format on corporate credibility. In order to accomplish this, a semantic differential scale was created. Stimulus materials were

created, translated and backtranslated. The experiment was conducted in two different cultural settings. Finally, the subject data were analyzed.

The stated purpose of this dissertation was to extend the body of work already completed in the social psychology field of impression management in two areas where there has been relatively little study thus far: mass communication, specifically corporate crisis communication, and cross-cultural comparative study. The data indicate that the MultiChem scenario has accomplished that goal. First, the study further extends impression management study into the mass communication field, indicating that contrary to popular belief, impressions of corporate credibility are not substantially reduced by presenting advocacy messages in advertising. Second, the study contributes to the body of literature in the cross-cultural impression management field, confirming empirically what has often been posited: that impressions of the same event vary based the cultural values of the individuals interpreting the event.

APPENDIX A
MULTICHEM CORPORATE WEB SITE

English version:



Spanish version:

Corporación MultiChem | Página 1 de 1

MultiChem Mundial | Nuestra Industria | Noticias | Nuestra Política Ambiental

MultiChem

AGRICULTURA | BIOQUÍMICA | INDUSTRIAL

Buscar

GO

Corporación MultiChem

Información Corporativa

Historia

Filantropía

Empleos

Contáctenos

MultiChem es una compañía innovadora que produce y comercializa productos agrícolas, biomédicos y químicos industriales a nivel mundial. MultiChem tiene plantas en seis continentes y vende sus productos en más de 100 países.

MultiChem desarrolla productos químicos con el propósito de descubrir e implementar procesos a favor del ambiente para ayudarnos a vivir mejor.

Últimas Noticias:

- Estados financieros del Primer Trimestre
- MultiChem Empieza Comercialización de Químicos Agrícolas en NZ
- MultiChem Dedica Nuevo Centro de Investigación en Mumbai

Condiciones de Privacia

http://www.multichem.com | 2/5/04

APPENDIX B
EXPERTISE STIMULUS MATERIALS

Expertise article text in English:

Winnipeg Times, August 24, 2001

Page 2D

CAS Honors MultiChem Scientists

The Canadian Academy of Sciences (CAS) has awarded its coveted annual Advancement Award to a team of scientists at MultiChem's Winnipeg research facility. The company said the prize, which includes a grant of $300,000 for continued research, will lead to increased exposure and opportunity at its Winnipeg operations center.

The Academy cited MultiChem's advancements in production processes for agricultural chemicals that significantly reduce harmful byproducts in the chemical industry.

MultiChem Scientists have already received numerous prizes for their work in reducing industrial waste associated with typical chemical production processes, including a Nobel Prize for their identification of an enzyme that aids in composting of agri-industrial waste.

The honored biotechnologists included James McKenny, William Bird, Francis Crawford and Theresa Smithers.

An awards ceremony will be held in Ottawa on October 14. Further information is available on the company's website at www.multichem.com or by contacting MultiChem Public Relations at 800-478-6784.

Expertise article text in Spanish:

Córdoba Hoy, 24 de agosto del 2001,

Página 2D

ACA honra a científicos de MultiChem

La Academia de Ciencias de Argentina (ACA) ha otorgado su codiciado premio de Adelantos Tecnológicos del año a un grupo de científicos del Centro de Investigación en MultiChem. La empresa dijo que el premio, que incluye un auspicio de 876.000,00 pesos para continuar las investigaciones, llevará a mayor reconocimiento y ampliará las oportunidades de su centro de operaciónes de Córdoba.

La Academia mencionó los avances de MultiChem en los procesos de producción de productos químicos para la agricultura, que reducen en forma significativa los residuos dañinos de la industria química.

Los científicos de MultiChem ya han sido premiados por sus avances en los procesos que reducen estos residuos, incluyendo un Premio Nobel por la identificación de una enzima que ayuda al abono de deshechos agro-industriales.

Entre los científicos premiados están José Armando Velázquez, Guillermo Ferrer, Fernando Vila y María Teresa Sanchez.

La ceremonia de entrega los premios se llevará a cabo el 14 de Octubre en Córdoba. Más información está disponible en el portal de MultiChem www.multichem.com o en la oficina de relaciones públicas de MultiChem al numero 88 478 678.

APPENDIX C
TRUSTWORTHINESS STIMULUS MATERIALS

Trustworthiness article text English:

Winnipeg Times, January 2, 2000

Page 3A

City Greets New MultiChem Research Center

Community leaders and corporate executives gathered on New Year's Day to dedicate the new Thomas J. Creighton Research Center at the University of Winnipeg. Mayor Frank Robinson and MultiChem President Thomas J. Creighton, Jr. jointly cut a ceremonial ribbon in the vaulted glass and polished marble lobby of the $30 million state-of-the-art facility, which will be home to UW's biotechnology lab and agricultural research center.

The building dedication was the centerpiece of a day-long celebration of MultiChem's long-running support of higher education, and many other philanthropic causes in Winnipeg.

"When my father brought MultiChem to Winnipeg 30 years ago, he said the company would be a driving force in the advancement of the community for decades to come," said Creighton. "Today, that promise has become a reality. And this magnificent building represents the cornerstone of a public-private partnership that will enrich the lives of all Winnipegers, and all Manitobans, into the new century and beyond."

More than 300 city officials, MultiChem employees and other guests toured the four-story, 67,000-square-foot building, which features a wide range of exhibits chronicling MultiChem's 30 years of involvement in the Winnipeg community.

"MultiChem has been more than one of our city's largest employers for the last three decades," said Mayor Robinson. "Through its generous support of myriad charitable causes, it has also been a source of hope for struggling students, disabled citizens, single mothers, needy children and so many others among us who have needed a helping hand."

The time-line exhibit of MultiChem's community activities began with the company's support of a Winnipeg junior soccer team and culminated with the company's funding of one of Canada's most important agricultural and biotechnology research centers. In all, MuiltiChem estimates its contribution to the Winnipeg community at over $165 million.

Items on display include detailed accounts of the processes, products and scientific advances MultiChem has introduced at its Winnipeg operations, as well as hundreds of news accounts and rare historic photographs.

The MultiChem exhibit will be open to the public from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday, through January 31.

MultiChem, a global specialty and agricultural chemicals producer, employs more than 5,000 at its Winnipeg research, production, distribution and administrative operations.

Trustworthiness article text in Spanish:

Córdoba Hoy, 2o de enero del 2000, Página 3A

Se inaugura nuevo centro de investigación de MultiChem

Líderes de la comunidad y ejecutivos de la empresa se reunieron el primero de enero para la dedicación del nuevo Centro de Investigación Thomas J. Creighton en la Universidad de Córdoba. La ceremonia de inauguración fue realizada por el alcalde, Enrique Díaz, y el presidente de MultiChem, Thomas J. Creighton Jr., en el vestíbulo de vidrio y mármol de las instalaciones punta, que costaron 30 millones de dólares y que serán la nueva sede para los laboratorios de biotecnología y el centro de investigaciónes agrícolas de la universidad.

La dedicación del centro duró todo el día y MultiChem demostró su apoyo al desarrollo de programas de educación secundaria y muchas otras causas filantrópicas en Córdoba.

"Cuando mi padre trajo MultiChem a Córdoba hace 30 años, dijo que la compañía sería una fuerza esencial detrás del desarrollo de la ciudad de Córdoba en las próximas décadas," dijo Creighton. "Hoy esa promesa se ha cumplido. Y este magnífico edificio representa la piedra angular de una asociación pública-privada que enriquecerá la vidas de la gente de Córdoba en el próximo siglo y más allá."

Más de 300 funcionarios de la ciudad, empleados de MultiChem y otros invitados recorrieron los cuatro pisos del edificio, que mide 67,000 metros cuadrados y que ofrece una exposición que muestra los 30 años de MultiChem y sus contribuciones a la comunidad de Córdoba.

"MultiChem ha sido uno de los prinipales generadores de empleo de nuestra ciudad en las tres últimas décadas," dijo el alcalde. "A través de su abundante ayuda hacia innumerables causas caritativas, MultiChem ha sido una fuente de esperanza para estudiantes con pocos recursos, ciudadanos con discapacidades, madres solteras, niños con necesidades y de muchos otros que han necesitado ayuda."

La exposición cronológica de las contribuciones y actividades de MultiChem para la comunidad, comenzó con un equipo infantil de fútbol y culminó en el financiamiento de uno de los centros de investigación agrícola y de biotecnológica más importantes de Argentina.

En total, MultiChem estima que su contribución a la comunidad de Córdoba asciende a más de 165 millones de dólares.

Los artículos de la exposición incluyen descripciones detalladas de los procesos, los productos y los avances científicos que MultiChem han introducido en sus operaciones en Córdoba, además de centenares de noticias y fotografías históricas raras.

La exposición de MultiChem estará abierta al público de las 9:00 de la mañana a las 4:00 de la tarde, de lunes a viernes, a partir del 31 de enero.

MultiChem se especializa en productos agrícolas y químicos a nivel mundial y emplea a más de 5.000 personas en las áreas de investigación, producción, distribución y operaciones administrativas en Córdoba.

APPENDIX D
EVENT REPORT STIMULUS MATERIALS

Event report article text in English:

Winnipeg Times, June 10, 2002, Page 1A

Explosion Injures 3, Evacuates 100s

A late-night explosion at MultiChem's main processing facility injured three workers and led to the evacuation of hundreds of residents in the surrounding area. One worker was treated and released; two remain hospitalized in guarded condition. Further details were withheld pending family notifications.

Officials described the residential evacuations as precautionary and predicted most people would be allowed to their homes in a matter of hours. Temporary shelters were established at Southside High School and the Armory at Edmonds Field.

Fire and Rescue officials indicated the event was contained. However, residents downwind of the facility were awakened by sirens and alerted by door-to-door patrols of a mandatory evacuation order. No injuries or other difficulties were reported as approximately 600 residents were escorted out of the area.

MultiChem engineers and Environmental Assessment Agency officials have begun comprehensive atmospheric testing and have announced a news conference for tomorrow at 10:00 am.

Event report article text in Spanish:

Córdoba Hoy, 10 de junio del 2002,
Página 1A

Explosión deja a 3 heridos, cientos de personas evacuadas

Una explosión en medio de la noche en la facilidad de proceso principal de MultiChem en Córdoba deja a tres empleados heridos y produce la evacuación de cientos de habitantes de la zona. Uno de los heridos fue dado de alta, pero dos más permanecen en terapia intensiva. Se darán más detalles a medida que sean reportados por las familiares de las víctimas.

Oficiales dijeron que las evacuaciones fueron hechas preventivamente. Se estimaba que las personas evacuadas podrán volver a sus casas dentro de unas pocas horas. Escuelas del área fueron establecidas como refugios temporales.

Oficiales de los curepos de bomberos y seguridad dijeron que el incidente fue contenido. Sin embargo, residents en la direción del viento fueron despertados por sirenas y por patrullas que alertaban a la gente de puerta en puerta sobre la evacuación mandatoria. Ninguno de los 600 evacuados resultaron heridos.

Ingenieros de MultiChem y funcionarios de la Agencia Regulatoria del Ambiente se encuentran en una evaluación exhaustivo de la atmósfera y darán una rueda de prensa mañana a las 10:00.

APPENDIX E
CLARITY EXCUSE STIMULUS MATERIALS

Clarity ad in English:

Winnipeg Times, June 20, 2002, 7A

ADVERTISEMENT

An Open Letter to Winnipeg from
The MultiChem Corporation

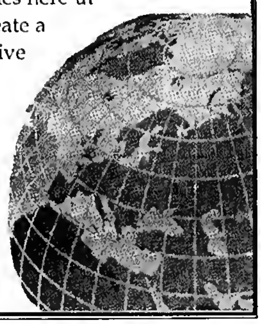
On June 10, 2002, MultiChem suffered a terrible tragedy. Three employees were injured in an explosion at our Winnipeg plant. In the aftermath of the incident, a small amount of hyroxi-dioxidase gas was released into the area surrounding the plant. All of us at MultiChem understand that the community has many questions about this incident.

First, we want to assure Winnipeg that the small amount of hydroxi-dioxidase that escaped from our plant poses *absolutely no health risk* to the surrounding community.

Second, we want to let the community know that MultiChem has been able to determine the reason for the explosion. During an experiment, a small amount of hyroxi-dioxidase was mixed with another chemical. While these two chemicals are known to be stable together, a new process was used to heat them to a temperature never before achieved in scientific experiments. No scientific data anticipated the explosive reaction of these chemicals when heated. However, now that the information is known, we can assure Winnipeg that there is no possibility of such an incident happening in the future.

We look forward to rebuilding our facilities here in Winnipeg, and to working together to create a better quality of life for all of those who live here.

Roger Bentworth
Vice President, MultiChem
Corporation



MultiChem

Clarity ad in Spanish:

Córdoba Hoy, 20 de junio del 2002,
Pagina 7A

PUBLICIDAD

Carta a Córdoba de

la Corporación MultiChem

El 10 de junio de 2002, MultiChem vivió una tragedia terrible. Tres empleados resultaron heridos en una explosión en nuestra planta de Córdoba. Después del incidente se derramó una pequeña cantidad de gas hyroxi-dioxidase por las áreas adyacentes a la planta. La gente de MultiChem sabe que la comunidad tiene preguntas sobre el incidente.

Primero, podemos asegurarles a los residentes de Córdoba que la pequeña cantidad de gas hyroxi-dioxidase que se derramó no presenta ningún riesgo para la salud de la comunidad.

También queremos informarles que hemos determinado la causa de la explosión en la planta. Estábamos conduciendo un experimento con dos gases que normalmente pueden mezclarse. Sin embargo, los gases fueron combinados con un proceso nuevo que aumenta las temperaturas. Este proceso no se había probado antes, ni tampoco estaban disponibles datos que anticipasen el accidente. Ahora que ésta información está disponible, les podemos asegurar que no habrá ningún otro accidente de este tipo en Córdoba.

Tenemos ganas de reconstruir nuestra planta y seguir trabajando juntos para mejorar la calidad de vida de todos los habitantes de Córdoba.

Roger Bentworth
Vicepresidente, Corporación MultiChem

MultiChem

Clarity news story text in English:

Winnipeg Times, June 20, 2002, Page 1A

MultiChem: Unpredictable Reaction Caused Explosion

No Health Risk from Released Gas

MultiChem officials have identified the cause of the June 10 explosion at the company's Winnipeg production facility, reported the released gas poses no health risk to the community and assured Environmental Assessment Agency officials there is no possibility the incident will be repeated.

"On June 10, MultiChem suffered a terrible tragedy," MultiChem Vice President Roger Bentworth told reporters. "Three employees were injured in an explosion at our Winnipeg Plant. In the aftermath of the incident, a small amount of hyroxi-dioxidase gas was released into the area surrounding the plant. All of us at MultiChem understand that the community has many questions about this incident.

"First, we want to assure Winnipeg that the small amount of hyroxi-dioxidase that escaped from our plant poses absolutely no health risk to the surrounding community."

Bentworth explained that the explosion occurred during an experiment when a new process was being used to combine chemicals know to be stable when mixed together.

"Second, we want to let the community know that MultiChem has been able to determine the reason for the explosion," Bentworth said. "During an experiment, a small amount of hyroxi-dioxidase was mixed with another chemical. While these two chemicals are known to be stable together, a new process was used to heat them to a temperature never before achieved in scientific experiments. No scientific data anticipated the explosive reaction of these chemicals when heated. However, now that the information is known, we can assure Winnipeg that there is no possibility of such an incident happening in the future."

MultiChem is a global producer and marketer of agricultural and industrial chemicals. With production facilities in six continents, MultiChem's products are sold in over 100 countries worldwide. The Company has operated a major production plant in Winnipeg for over 30 years.

"We look forward to rebuilding our facilities here in Winnipeg, and to working together to create a better quality of life for all of those who live here," Bentworth told the assembled crowd.

Clarity news story text in Spanish:

Córdoba Hoy, 20 de junio del 2002, Página 1A

MultiChem: Reacción impredecible causa explosión

Gases liberados no representan daños a la salud

Los funcionarios de MultiChem identificaron la causa de la explosión ocurrida el 10 de junio en su planta de producción en Córdoba, aseguraron que los gases liberados no representan ningún riesgo para la salud a las personas en esta comunidad, y aseguraron a los funcionarios de la Agencia Regulatoria del Ambiente que no hay ninguna posibilidad de que se repita el incidente.

"El 10 de junio de 2002, MultiChem pasó por una tragedia terrible," el vicepresidente MultiChem, Roger Bentworth explicó. "Tres empleados resultaron heridos en una explosión en nuestra planta en Córdoba. En el período subsiguiente del incidente se derramaron pocas cantidades del gas hyroxi-dioxidase por las áreas adjacentes de la planta. La gente de MultiChem sabe que la comunidad tiene preguntas sobre el incidente."

"Primero, podemos asegurarles a los residentes de Córdoba que la cantidad pequeña de gas hyroxi-dioxidase que se derramó no presenta ningún riesgos a la salud de la comunidad de alrededor." Bentworth explicó que el incidente ocurrió al usar un proceso nuevo para mezclar dos gases que normalmente pueden mezclarse.

"También queremos informarles que hemos determinado la causa de la explosión en la planta. Estábamos conduciendo un experimento con dos gases que normalmente pueden mezclarse. Sin embargo los gases fueron combinados por un proceso nuevo que aumenta sus temperaturas. Este proceso no se había intentado antes, ni tampoco estaban disponibles datos que anticiparon el accidente. Ahora que ésta información está disponible, les podemos asegurar que no habrá ningún otro accidente de este tipo en Córdoba."

MultiChem es una compañía innovadora que produce y comercializa productos agrícolas, biomédicos y químicos industriales a escala mundial. MultiChem tiene plantas en seis continentes, vende sus productos en más de 100 países y tiene 30 años en Córdoba.

Bentworth le dijo a la audiencia: "Miramos al futuro por le reconstrucción de nuestra planta y por seguir trabajando juntos para mejorar la calidad de vida de todos los habitantes de Córdoba."

APPENDIX F
OBLIGATION EXCUSE STIMULUS MATERIALS

Obligation ad in English:

Winnipeg Times, June 20, 2002, 7A

ADVERTISEMENT

An Open Letter to Winnipeg from

The MultiChem Corporation

On June 10, 2002, MultiChem suffered a terrible tragedy. Three employees were injured in an explosion at our Westside Plant. In the aftermath of the incident, a small amount of hydroxi-dioxidase gas was released into the area surrounding the plant. All of us at MultiChem understand that the community has many questions about this incident.

First, we want to assure Winnipeg that the small amount of hydroxi-dioxidase that escaped from our plant poses *absolutely no health risk* to the surrounding community.

Second, we want to let the community know that MultiChem has been able to determine the reason for the explosion. Prior to the explosion MultiChem was performing work for the federal government, using a process prescribed and mandated by the Environmental Assessment Agency. It now appears that the process, as outlined by government regulations, is unsafe. MultiChem has therefore discontinued our contract with the federal government. Now that we have decided to discontinue participating in these kinds of processes, we can assure Winnipeg that there is no possibility of such an incident happening in the future.

We look forward to rebuilding our facilities here in Winnipeg, and to working together to create a better quality of life for all of those who live here.

Roger Bentworth
Vice President, MultiChem
Corporation

MultiChem

Obligation ad in Spanish:

Córdoba Hoy, 20 de junio del 2002,
Pagina 7A

PUBLICIDAD

Carta a Córdoba de

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Primero, podemos asegurarles a los residentes de Córdoba que la pequeña cantidad de gas hyroxi-dioxidase que se derramó no presenta ningún riesgo para la salud de la comunidad.

También queremos informarles que hemos determinado la causa de la explosión. Antes de la explosión, MultiChem estaba trabajando para el gobierno usando un proceso prescrito y regulado por la Agencia Regulatoria del Ambiente. Ahora parece que el proceso ordenado por las regulaciones gubernamentales no es seguro. Por esta razón, MultiChem ha rescindido el contrato con el gobierno. Hemos dejado de trabajar con estos procesos y les podemos asegurar que no hay la menor posibilidad de que ocurra otro accidente de este tipo en Córdoba en el futuro.

Tenemos ganas de reconstruir nuestra planta y seguir trabajando juntos para mejorar la calidad de vida de todos los habitantes de Córdoba.

Roger Bentworth
Vicepresidente, Corporación MultiChem

MultiChem

Obligation news story text in English:

Winnipeg Times, June 20, 2002, Page 1A

MultiChem: Government Mandated Process Caused Explosion

No Health Risk from Released Gas

MultiChem officials have identified the cause of the June 10 explosion at the company's Winnipeg production facility, reported the released gas poses no health risk to the community and assured Environmental Assessment Agency officials there is no possibility the incident will be repeated.

"On June 10, MultiChem suffered a terrible tragedy," MultiChem Vice President Roger Bentworth told reporters. "Three employees were injured in an explosion at our Winnipeg Plant. In the aftermath of the incident, a small amount of hyroxi-dioxidase gas was released into the area surrounding the plant. All of us at MultiChem understand that the community has many questions about this incident.

"First, we want to assure Winnipeg that the small amount of hyroxi-dioxidase that escaped from our plant poses absolutely no health risk to the surrounding community."

Bentworth explained that the incident occurred while the company was using a government-mandated production process.

"Second, we want to let the community know that MultiChem has been able to determine the reason for the explosion," Bentworth said. "Prior to the explosion MultiChem was performing work for the federal government, using a process prescribed and mandated by the Environmental Assessment Agency. It now appears that the process, as outlined by government regulations, is unsafe. MultiChem has therefore discontinued our contract with the federal government. Now that we have decided to discontinued participating in these kinds of processes, we can assure Winnipeg that there is no possibility of such an incident happening in the future."

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Obligation news story text in Spanish:

Córdoba Hoy, 20 de junio del 2002, Pagina 1A

MultiChem: Gobierno ordena proceso de producción que causa explosión

Gases liberados no representan daños a la salud

Los funcionarios de MultiChem identificaron la causa de la explosión ocurrida el 10 de junio en su planta de producción en Córdoba, aseguraron que los gases liberados no representan ningún riesgo para la salud a las personas en esta comunidad, y aseguraron a los funcionarios de la Agencia Regulatoria del Ambiente que no hay ninguna posibilidad de que se repita el incidente.

"El 10 de Junio del 2002, MultiChem pasó por una tragedia terrible" el presidente MultiChem, Roger Bentworth explico. "Tres empleados fueron heridos en una explosión en nuestra planta en Córdoba. Durante la explosión se liberaron pocas cantidades del gas hyroxi-dioxidase por las áreas adyacentes de la planta. Aquí en MultiChem sabemos que la comunidad tiene preguntas sobre el incidente."

"Primero, nos gustaría asegurarles a vosotros en Córdoba que la cantidad de gas hyroxi-dioxidase que se liberó no presenta riesgos a la salud en la comunidad expuesta a tal gas." Bentworth explicó que el incidente ocurrió al usar un proceso de producción ordenado por el gobierno.

"También queremos informarles que hemos determinado la causa de la explosión. Antes de la explosión, MultiChem estaba trabajando para el gobierno nacional usando un proceso prescrito y regulado por la Agencia Regulatoria del Ambiente. Hoy parece que el proceso ordenado por las regulaciónes gubernamentales no es seguro. Es por ésto que MultiChem ha dejado de trabajar con estos procesos y les podemos asegurar que no habrá ningún otro accidente de este tipo en Córdoba en el futuro."

MultiChem es una compañía innovadora que produce y comercializa productos agrícolas, biomédicos y químicos industriales a escala mundial. MultiChem tiene plantas en seis continentes, vende sus productos en más de 100 países y tiene 30 años en Córdoba.

Bentworth le dijo a la audiencia: "Miramos al futuro por le reconstrucción de nuestra planta y por seguir trabajando juntos para mejorar la calidad de vida de todos los habitantes de Córdoba."

APPENDIX G
CONTROL EXCUSE STIMULUS MATERIALS

Control ad in English:

Winnipeg Times, June 20, 2002, 7A

ADVERTISEMENT

An Open Letter to Winnipeg from

The MultiChem Corporation

On June 10, 2002, MultiChem suffered a terrible tragedy. Three employees were injured in an explosion at our Westside Plant. In the aftermath of the incident, a small amount of hyroxi-dioxidase gas was released into the area surrounding the plant. All of us at MultiChem understand that the community has many questions about this incident.

First, we want to assure Winnipeg that the small amount of hydroxi-dioxidase that escaped from our plant poses *absolutely no health risk* to the surrounding community.

Second, we want to let the community know that MultiChem has been able to determine the reason for the explosion. A faulty valve in a new holding tank allowed hydroxi-dioxidase gas to mix with another chemical, causing the unfortunate explosion. MultiChem has decided to discontinue the use of these holding tank valves in its plants nationwide. Therefore, we can assure Winnipeg that there is no possibility of such an incident happening in the future.

We look forward to rebuilding our facilities here in Winnipeg, and to working together to create a better quality of life for all of those who live here.

Roger Bentworth
Vice President, MultiChem
Corporation

MultiChem

Control ad in Spanish:

Córdoba Hoy, 20 de junio del 2002,
Pagina 7A

PUBLICIDAD

Carta a Córdoba de

la Corporación MultiChem

El 10 de junio de 2002, MultiChem vivió una tragedia terrible. Tres empleados resultaron heridos en una explosión en nuestra planta de Córdoba. Después del incidente se derramó una pequeña cantidad de gas hyroxi-dioxidase por las áreas adyacentes a la planta. La gente de MultiChem sabe que la comunidad tiene preguntas sobre el incidente.

Primero, podemos asegurarles a los residentes de Córdoba que la pequeña cantidad de gas hyroxi-dioxidase que se derramó no presenta ningún riesgo para la salud de la comunidad.

También queremos in-formarles que hemos determinado la causa de la explosión en la planta. Una válvula defectuosa en un tanque nuevo causó que el gas hydroxi-dioxidase se mezclara con otros productos químicos, produciendo la desafortunada explosión. MultiChem ha decidido abandonar el uso de las válvulas de estos tanques contenedores en sus plantas a escala nacional. Por lo tanto podemos asegurar a la comunidad de Córdoba que un accidente de este tipo no volverá a ocurrir.

Tenemos ganas de reconstruir nuestra planta y seguir trabajando juntos para mejorar la calidad de vida de todos los habitantes de Córdoba.

Roger Bentworth
Vicepresidente, Corporación MultiChem

MultiChem

Control news story text in English:

Winnipeg Times - June 20, 2002. Page 1A

MultiChem: Faulty Valve Caused Explosion

No Health Risk from Released Gas

MultiChem officials have identified the cause of the June 10 explosion at the company's Winnipeg production facility, reported the released gas poses no health risk to the community and assured Environmental Assessment Agency officials there is no possibility the incident will be repeated.

"On June 10, MultiChem suffered a terrible tragedy," MultiChem Vice President Roger Bentworth told reporters. "Three employees were injured in an explosion at our Winnipeg Plant. In the aftermath of the incident, a small amount of hyroxi-dioxidase gas was released into the area surrounding the plant. All of us at MultiChem understand that the community has many questions about this incident.

"First, we want to assure Winnipeg that the small amount of hyroxi-dioxidase that escaped from our plant poses absolutely no health risk to the surrounding community."

Bentworth explained that a faulty valve in a new holding tank allowed hyroxi-dioxidase gas to mix with another chemical, causing the explosion.

"Second, we want to let the community know that MultiChem has been able to determine the reason for the explosion," Bentworth said. "A faulty valve in a new holding tank allowed hyroxi-diosidase to mix with another chemical, causing the unfortunate explosion. MultiChem has decided to discontinue the use of these holding tanks in its plants nationwide. Therefore, we can assure Winnipeg that there is no possibility of such an incident happening in the future."

MultiChem is a global producer and marketer of agricultural and industrial chemicals. With production facilities in six continents, MultiChem's products are sold in over 100 countries worldwide. The Company has operated a major production plant in Winnipeg for over 30 years.

"We look forward to rebuilding our facilities here in Winnipeg, and to working together to create a better quality of life for all of those who live here," Bentworth told the assembled crowd.

Control news story in Spanish:

Córdoba Hoy, 20 de junio del 2002, Página 1A

MultiChem: Válvula defectuosa causa explosión

Gases liberados no representan daños a la salud

Los funcionarios de MultiChem identificaron la causa de la explosión ocurrida el 10 de junio en su planta de producción en Córdoba, aseguraron que los gases liberados no representan ningún riesgo para la salud a las personas en esta comunidad, y aseguraron a los funcionarios de la Agencia Regulatoria del Ambiente que no hay ninguna posibilidad de que se repita el incidente.

"El 10 de Junio del 2002, MultiChem pasó por una tragedia terrible" el presidente MultiChem, Roger Bentworth explico. "Tres empleados fueron heridos en una explosión en nuestra planta en Córdoba. Durante la explosión se liberaron pocas cantidades del gas hyroxi-dioxidase por las áreas adyacentes de la planta. Aquí en MultiChem sabemos que la comunidad tiene preguntas sobre el incidente."

"Primero, nos gustaría asegurarles a vosotros en Córdoba que la cantidad de gas hyroxi-dioxidase que se liberaron no presentan riesgos a la salud en la comunidad expuesta a tal gas." Bentworth explico que el incidente ocurrió cuando una de las válvulas en un tanque que contenía el gas hydroxi-dioxidase estaba dañada, lo que causo que se derramara el gas y se mezclara con otros químicos, produciendo la desafortunada explosión.

"También queremos informarles que hemos determinado la causa de la explosión en la planta. Una de las válvulas en un tanque que contenía el gas hydroxi-dioxidase estaba dañada, lo que causo que se derramara el gas y se mezclara con otros químicos, produciendo la desafortunada explosión. MultiChem ha decidido descontinuar el uso de las válvulas de los tanques contenedores en sus plantas a escala nacional. Por lo tanto le queremos asegurar a la comunidad de Córdoba que un accidente de este tipo no volverá a ocurrir."

MultiChem es una compañía innovadora que produce y comercializa productos agrícolas, biomédicos y químicos industriales a escala mundial. MultiChem tiene plantas en seis continentes, vende sus productos en más de 100 países y tiene 30 años en Córdoba.

Bentworth le dijo a la audiencia: "Miramos al futuro por le reconstrucción de nuestra planta y por seguir trabajando juntos para mejorar la calidad de vida de todos los habitantes de Córdoba."

APPENDIX H
CONNOLLY-AHERN'S CORPORATE CREDIBILITY MEASUREMENT

Scales in English

+++++

Instructions: The purpose of this study is to measure your attitude toward MultiChem corporation. Below are a series of scales. Please circle the number between each pair of words and phrases that best represents how you feel about MultiChem Corporation.

Bad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good
Dislike quite a lot	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Like quite a lot
Dangerous	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Safe
Dishonest	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Honest
Inexperienced	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Experienced
Is concerned about making profits	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Is concerned about the public interest
Has poorly trained staff	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Has well trained staff
Is not concerned about community well-being	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Is concerned about community well-being
Unqualified	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Qualified
Amateurish	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Expert
Doesn't make truthful claims	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Makes truthful claims
Poor quality products	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	High quality products
Passive	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Active
Unbelievable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Believable
Unjust	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Just
Not trustworthy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Trustworthy

Please take a moment to tell us about yourself, by circling the appropriate response.
I am (1) Female (2) Male.

I am a (1) native of the United States (2) naturalized U.S. citizen (3) non-U.S. citizen.

Thank you for your time!

Scales in Spanish

+++++

Instructiones: El propósito de este estudio es medir su actitud frente a la empresa MultiChem. Abajo hay una serie de escalas. Por favor circule el número entre cada par de palabras o frases que mejor representa sus sentimientos con respeto a MultiChem.

Malo	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Bueno
No me gusta mucho	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Me gusta mucho
Peligroso	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Seguro
Deshonesto	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Honesto
Sin experiencia	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Con experiencia
Se preocupa por las ganancias	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Se preocupa por el interés público
Tiene el personal mal entrenado	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Tiene el personal bien entrenado
No se preocupa acerca de bienestar de comunidad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Se preocupa acerca de bienestar de comunidad
No cualificado	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Cualificado
Poco serio	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Experto
No hace los reclamos veraces	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Hace los reclamos veraces
Los productos son la mala calidad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Los productos son buena calidad
Pasivo	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Activo
No creíble	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Creíble
Injusto	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Justo
No confiable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Confiable

Por favor, díganos algo sobre usted, circule la respuesta adecuada.

Yo soy (1) hombre (2) mujer.

Nacionalidad (1) español (2) otra.

Muchas gracias por su atención.

APPENDIX I
BERLO, LEMERT, AND MERTZ'S (1970) SOURCE CREDIBILITY SCALE

Safety Factor

Kind:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Cruel
Safe:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Dangerous
Friendly:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Unfriendly
Just:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Unjust
Honest:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Dishonest

Qualification Factor

Trained:	__: __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Untrained
Experienced:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Inexperienced
Qualified:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Unqualified
Skilled:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Unskilled
Informed:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Uninformed

Dynamism Factor

Aggressive:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Meek
Emphatic:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Hesitant
Bold:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Timid
Active:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Passive
Energetic:	__ : __: __: __: __: __: __ :	Tired

APPENDIX J
MCCROSKEY'S (1966) SOURCE CREDIBILITY SCALE

Authoritativeness

Reliable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Unreliable
Uninformed	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Informed
Unqualified	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Qualified
Intelligent	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Unintelligent
Valuable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Worthless
Inexpert	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Expert

Character

Hontest	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Dishonest
Unfriendly	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Friendly
Pleasant	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Unpleasant
Selfish	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Unselfish
Awful	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Nice
Virtuous	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Sinful

APPENDIX K
GAZIANO AND MCGRATH'S (1986) NEWS CREDIBILITY SCALE

Instructions: We'd like you to think about the daily newspaper you are the most familiar with. Please circle the number between each pair of words and phrases that best represents how you feel about the daily newspaper you have in mind.

Is fair	5 4 3 2 1	Is unfair
Is biased	5 4 3 2 1	Is unbiased
Tells the whole story	5 4 3 2 1	Doesn't tell the whole story
Is accurate	5 4 3 2 1	Is inaccurate
Invades people's privacy	5 4 3 2 1	Respects people's privacy
Does watch after readers' interests	5 4 3 2 1	Does not watch after readers' interests
Is concerned about the community's well-being	5 4 3 2 1	Is not concerned about the community's well-being
Does separate fact and opinion	5 4 3 2 1	Does not separate fact and opinion
Can be trusted	5 4 3 2 1	Cannot be trusted
Is concerned about the public interest	5 4 3 2 1	Is concerned about making profits
Is factual	5 4 3 2 1	Is opinionated
Has well-trained reporters	5 4 3 2 1	Is poorly-trained reporters

APPENDIX L
FERGUSON'S (2003) ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BRAND SCALE

Instructions: The purpose of this study is to measure your attitude toward four non-profit organizations. Below are four brand names followed by a series of scales. Please evaluate the brands by circling the number that best reflects your attitude toward each.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters

Bad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good
Dislike quite a lot	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Like quite a lot
Unpleasant	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Pleasant
Poor quality	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good quality

Boys & Girls Clubs

Bad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good
Dislike quite a lot	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Like quite a lot
Unpleasant	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Pleasant
Poor quality	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good quality

NCAA

Bad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good
Dislike quite a lot	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Like quite a lot
Unpleasant	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Pleasant
Poor quality	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good quality

YWCA

Bad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good
Dislike quite a lot	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Like quite a lot
Unpleasant	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Pleasant
Poor quality	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good quality

APPENDIX M
NEWELL AND GOLDSMITH'S (2001) CORPORATE CREDIBILITY SCALE

1. The corporation has a great amount of experience.
   Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely Agree

2. The corporation is skilled in what they do.
   Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely Agree

3. The corporation has great expertise.
   Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely Agree

4. The corporation does *not* have very much experience.
   Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely Agree

5. I trust the corporation.
   Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely Agree

6. The corporation makes truthful claims.
   Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely Agree

7. The corporation is honest.
   Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely Agree

8. I do *not* believe what the corporation tells me (p. 237).
   Completely Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely Agree

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Colleen Connolly-Ahern received her Bachelor of Arts in history from Georgetown University in 1987, and her Master of Arts in Mass Communication from the University of Florida in 2002. Prior to returning to complete her graduate education, Connolly-Ahern held a number of positions in the publishing and marketing fields, including managing editor of *Marine Log* magazine, promotion manager of *USA Today*, the national newspaper, and president of Abbey Lane Marketing. After completing her doctoral work, Connolly-Ahern will go to The Pennsylvania State University, where she will be an assistant professor of advertising and public relations.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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